



L2 listening at work

A qualitative study of international employees' experiences with understanding Danish as a second language

Øhrstrøm, Charlotte

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PhD Thesis

Charlotte Øhrstrøm

L2 listening at work

A qualitative study of international employees'
experiences with understanding Danish as a second
language

Name of department: Department of Nordic Studies and Linguistics

Author: Charlotte Øhrstrøm

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Academic advisors: Anne Holmen and Mette Ginman

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Listening and understanding in a second language (L2) is hard work. It requires learning and using a substantial amount of knowledge to perceive and recognize words as well as infer and interpret the meaning of spoken language in different social situations. Adult learners often find listening in an L2 difficult because of the temporary character of spoken language taking place in real time, which few have been taught how to deal with in neither their first nor second language(s). However, many adult learners also find listening to be the most important skill for immediate participation in social L2 contexts (e.g., Vandergrift, 2007).

In this study, I seek to investigate adult language learners' experiences with listening in Danish as an L2 outside the language classroom. L2 listening has primarily been investigated in classroom situations or experimental studies focusing on listening processes and the factors that influence listening success (i.e., comprehension) (e.g., Vandergrift, 2003; Goh, 2000). Only few studies have focused on listening situations outside the language classroom in both one-way and two-way listening situations (e.g., Brouwer, 2000; Bremer et al. 1996). This study thus differs significantly from previous studies on L2 listening by combining knowledge from previous studies on L2 listening with relevant studies on interaction and language at work to describe and nuance what listening in an L2 at work involves. This study therefore contributes with new theoretical as well as methodological knowledge on L2 listening, which according is the least researched language skill in Second Language Acquisition research (SLA) (Holm, 1999; Vandergrift, 2007). The study furthermore has important implications for the teaching of L2 listening, which seems an essential language skill for many L2 learners today (see e.g., Jürna, 2014).

I use the term *experiences* to refer to the learners' reflections and observations in relation to their L2 listening. The point of focusing on learner experiences is to capture that *how* and *why* learners listen in an L2, cannot be separated from their prior experiences and the social contexts in which they are learning and listening. My point of departure is that humans are social beings who use language to exchange and negotiate meaning, achieve communicative goals and construct identities, and I regard language learning as embedded in social practice. However, I also view language learning as an individual cognitive process which takes place in the mind of the individual learner. The overall aim of the study is therefore to investigate

how social as well as cognitive parameters influence L2 listening in different situations, and *how* this can be investigated (and analyzed) in a holistic way by exploring the following research questions:

1. When do international employees working in Danish companies with English as a corporate language listen in Danish as an L2?
2. What listening comprehension problems do they experience, and why are some listening situations more difficult than others?
3. How do the international employees handle different listening situations at work?

The study is empirical and highly explorative in that I make use of various qualitative techniques related to different research traditions within SLA. I place the learners at the center of the study and make use of different techniques to allow the learners to reflect upon their L2 learning and listening. This means using think-a-loud exercises but also semi structured interviews where I present examples from other listeners in order to prompt the learners to talk about listening. These techniques are supplemented with observations and recordings for describing and understanding the learners' everyday work-life and listening situations. Finally, but equally importantly, I make use of member-checking for validation and ethical purposes.

The purpose of combining techniques and approaches from different traditions is investigate listening in a holistic way, because my data and analyses show that cognitive and social aspects of L2 learning and listening cannot be separated for the individual learner. This means that the theoretical aspects of the study have been selected to analyze the data and describe the background of the study, and the methodological approaches serve the purpose of shedding light on both cognitive and social aspects of listening. In the following sections of this first chapter of the dissertation, I give a brief introduction to the research field of SLA and the theoretical approaches to L2 listening, which form the basis of the study. I then briefly introduce the societal frame of the study and the empirical data generated before concluding the chapter with an overview of the different parts of the dissertation.

1.1 Theoretical background: Approaches to L2 listening

The research field of SLA investigates how L2s are learned by individuals or groups acquiring L2 languages. SLA started out as a subfield of Applied Linguistics in the 1960s and is closely linked to language teaching (e.g., Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991). Early studies focused primarily on linguistic aspects of L2 learning, such as how learners' L2 language developed in different stages in relation to, for example, syntax or vocabulary. Later studies focused more on psychological aspects, including why some learners are more successful than others because of different general or individual factors, such as age, gender, aptitude and motivation. In the 1990s, Firth and Wagner (1997), among others, called for a more holistic approach to SLA, acknowledging the social contexts and introducing a more dynamic view on learner identities. This led most studies to take the social context into account to varying degrees. SLA is still an "extremely rich and diverse subject, drawing on aspects of linguistics, psychology, sociology and education" (Cook, 2008, p. 6), and therefore includes different combinations of linguistic, psychological and socially informed approaches to L2 learning.

For the purpose of this study, it is relevant to highlight psycholinguistic and socially informed approaches to SLA because these approaches contribute relevant knowledge to the investigation of L2 listening of a cognitive as well as a social nature. Generally speaking, psycholinguistic approaches to SLA have primarily made use of quantitative techniques to describe the general aspects of the language learning process; these approaches consider L2 learning an individual process that takes place in the mind of the learner. By contrast, socially informed approaches have primarily used qualitative techniques with a focus on learners as social actors in specific situations; these approaches view language learning as a social process taking place in interaction among people inseparable from the social environment (see e.g., Larsen-Freeman, 2007). Many SLA studies, including the present study, can of course be placed somewhere in between these excessively described approaches, but the purpose of contrasting them is to show that different approaches have different aims of investigating listening, and that this influences the methodology and the theoretical concepts used in the studies.

L2 listening is a concept that primarily exists within psycholinguistic and applied orientations to SLA. L2 learning is considered to be based on the four language learning skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing. Listening and reading are considered receptive skills and were

historically considered passive skills, but researchers today agree that all four skills are active and interactive in the sense that the learner engages with the language and with other people when learning and using the skills (see Flowerdew & Miller, 2005, on listening).

The four skills are primarily used for language teaching and in psycholinguistic research, but they also refer to the mode of communication being either oral or written and the direction of communication being either receptive or productive. The goal of language learning is to master all four skills, or the skills necessary for the learner (Lund, 2009), but the weighing of skills in language teaching differs considerably in language classrooms and so do researchers' attitudes towards the importance of the different skills in L2 language learning (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). The difference between approaches to investigating listening therefore primarily relates to whether the four language skills can actually be separated in language use and learning (and thus also in research), as well to the theoretical stand on whether language learning takes place in the mind of the individual learner or between people (or both).

Psycholinguistic studies on L2 listening focus on listening as a *skill* and the cognitive processes that form this skill as well as the factors that influence successful comprehension (e.g., O'Malley, Chamot & Küpper, 1989; Rost, 2011; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). In general, the psycholinguistic L2 listening studies have been conducted in experimental settings to isolate the listening skill from other skills and from uncontrollable factors influencing the listening processes, or in classroom settings focusing on the differences between skilled and less skilled listeners. They primarily employ quantitative methods, such as questionnaires, tasks or tests, to describe the more general aspects of the language learning process. Interviews and stimulated recalls are also sometimes used to investigate learners' awareness of their cognitive processes while listening and their interpretations of listening texts (e.g., Field, 2004; Goh 1997, 2000; Vandergrift 2003). The psycholinguistic studies have contributed significantly to the understanding of how meaning is achieved in the mind of the individual learner through general cognitive processes as well as how listening in an L2 is learned. However, they tell us very little about the social circumstances of listening outside the language classroom, or how individual learners experience and handle different listening situations.

Of the few studies, which focus on reception outside the language classroom, Bremer et al. (1996) and Brouwer (2000) contribute with relevant knowledge on listening in interaction by

making use of recordings of naturally occurring conversations between L2 learners and fluent L2 speakers. Furthermore, Bremer et al. (1996) supplement their analysis of interactions with tasks, ethnographic interviews and observations to provide relevant background information about the learners and their interlocutors. These two socially informed SLA studies regard meaning as something mutually achieved among language users which cannot be separated from social contexts. They therefore use the term *understanding* instead of *comprehension*. In this way they reject traditional models of communication, which regard listeners as receivers of messages from speakers, and view comprehension as the decoding of the speakers' intended message.

Both of the socially informed studies show that listening is dependent on who you listen to, the relationship between speaker and listener, what was said right before this interaction, as well as how one is expected to reply in a specific social context. They therefore add relevant knowledge to the previous mentioned psycholinguistic studies on the social aspects of listening as well as to methods for investigating listening outside the language classroom. However, in contrast to the psycholinguistic studies on L2 listening, they only focus on two-way listening and not on the range of different listening situations that L2 learners experience in everyday situations.

In this study, I seek to combine the psycholinguistic and socially informed approaches to L2 listening to investigate both one-way and two-way listening situations at work. I therefore focus on comprehension and understanding as dependent on cognitive processes and strategies as well as social circumstances and actions. I define *listening* as *focusing attention on an oral text (i.e., speech) with the purpose of (gaining) comprehension*, irrespective of whether comprehension is achieved or not, and irrespective of whether listening takes place in a one-way situation or in interaction. I therefore use *comprehension* and *understanding* interchangeably because they both involve perceiving and recognizing words as well as inferring and interpreting meaning of an oral text in a social context; they thus refer to the same processes. I therefore also take as point of departure that listening as a skill can be investigated separated from the other skills, at least to some degree, and I regard listening competence as a continuum from one-way listening to listening in interaction, thus reflecting the same skill used under different social circumstances.

The theoretical backgrounds and concepts touched upon in this section will be further addressed in the theoretical framework of the study in Chapter 2. In the following section, I describe the overall societal context of the study.

1.2 Framing the study: Globalization, skilled migration and language learning

The focus of the study is on international employees and their need to understand Danish while working at international companies with English as a corporate language in Denmark. International employees are also often referred to as knowledge workers, expats, skilled migrants, talents, globalists or well-educated professionals in everyday language in for example popular articles such as Nielsen (2012) and Sloth (2012). These names all refer to workers who travel around the world because of their job. International migration can be seen as a “trend” and has been a specific dimension of globalization since the 1990s (e.g., Deters, 2011). It can be described as a competition to attract specific skills to create innovation and growth (The Expat Study, 2014). The positively loaded names for this group of migrants is related to a political agenda of attracting and retaining skilled labor because economic predictions show that Denmark, as well as other countries, expects a lack of specialized knowledge in the future. Attracting and retaining skilled labor is therefore important in order to compete on the global market and cope with the burden of an ageing population.

Few studies have focused on skilled migration and language learning in professional contexts (Deters, 2011). Studies on adult migration and language learning often focus on the less resourceful learners and their difficulties participating in the L2 environment as well as the asymmetrical power relations between minority and majority speakers (e.g., Norton, 2000; Roberts, 2000; Kirilova, 2013). However, L2 learners in business environments, such as the ones in the present study, have different opportunities and choices in relation to language use because of a shared corporate language and more equal status relationship with the local employees (Roberts, 2010). International migration leads to new perspectives on language learning, and the topic of this study therefore fits well into a more overall contemporary societal discussion of language learning in a globalization era (see also Block & Cameron, 2002; Coupland, 2010), as well as a Danish (and Nordic) discussion of internationalization and language policy (Hultgren, Gregersen & Thøgersen, 2014).

Within recent years, many initiatives have been taken to make Denmark, and especially the capital of Copenhagen, an attractive place to work and live for this group of migrants. More or less all refugees and migrants who come to Denmark are offered three years of state-funded Danish classes, and these classes have over time become more and more focused on work-related language. For example, The University of Copenhagen offers Danish for Knowledge Workers, Hellerup Sprogcenter (Hellerup Language Center) offers Danish for doctors, and Clavis, (Language School) in collaboration with Consortium for Global Talent, offers Danish courses at the workplaces for international employees from nineteen of the largest Danish and international companies in Denmark.

Furthermore, Expat Study, which is a recurring survey on highly educated foreigners' experiences of living and working in Denmark, stresses the importance of Danish language skills for the international employees' integration in Denmark and their possibilities for socializing both in and outside the workplace. In their most recent report they point out that "the language barrier is, in general, an essential factor for expats since it is often highlighted as a reason for leaving Denmark earlier and among the factors that can make expats stay longer" (Expat Study, 2014, p. 6). They also point out that even though most of these expats in Denmark work in companies with English as the corporate language, they still express the need to know more Danish. Madsen and Bjerregård (2008), in addition, claim that having a shared corporate language does not necessarily eliminate language barriers among the employees but may in fact lead to problematic social group formations, and according to Thuesen, Tørslev and Jensen (2011), language courses work best for the international employees when the courses are directly linked to the workplace and focus on work-related language.

Most international employees can get by with writing, reading and even speaking in English while working in Denmark because most Danes master English at a high level (Eurobarometer, 2012). Lønsmann (2011) argues that even though English is considered prestigious and necessary in Danish companies, Danish is often spoken during lunch and coffee breaks among the Danish colleagues. In addition Jürna's (2014) study of international researchers' needs for Danish while working at the University of Copenhagen shows that the international employees themselves regard understanding Danish the most important and necessary skill when living and working in Denmark. The international employees do not

necessarily need or want to master all language skills at a high level since they can get by with using English in most situations. Furthermore, their stay in Denmark may be limited. However, learning to listen and understand Danish is urgent for many international employees because they immediately need to be able to participate in interaction at work and want to fit in in the local workplace community. This study therefore contributes with relevant new knowledge on international employees' actual needs for understanding Danish at work, as well as to what it means to listen in an L2 outside the language classroom in general, which is necessary knowledge for the teaching of L2 listening across languages. In the following section, I will introduce the empirical data of the study.

1.3 The data

The data has primarily been generated at IBM Denmark, and consists of four case studies as well as around 14 interviews, one focus group interview and two diary studies. IBM is a global technology and consulting corporation with headquarters in the USA. It has a total of around 380.000 employees based at different locations around the world. IBM is indeed a company that makes use of the globalized labor market in the sense that it imports the expertise it needs from around the world to carry out specific local tasks. IBM Denmark is one of the largest international companies and has around 2500 employees. Approximately 300 of these employees are international employees working in Denmark on a fixed-term contract averaging 6-9 months. Only 100 foreign employees are on a permanent contract (email from Tine Hagenau, Global Mobility IBM Denmark, August 2012). This means that a large number of IBM Denmark's international employees work in Denmark for a limited period of time on specific consultant assignments.

IBM has English as its corporate language regardless of location, which makes it easy for international employees to work at different locations at different times, but the local departments often have a large number of local employees, who also use the local language at work. IBM Denmark has no formal definition of what having English as a corporate language means or any managerial requirements regarding the international employees' Danish skills (interview with Henrik Liebetrau, HR Manager IBM Denmark, October 2014). The different locations and teams visited and observed while generating data therefore also had very

different language practices for the use English and Danish (and other languages). The individual international employees who participated in the study because of this had very different needs for learning and using Danish at work and thus also very different experiences with listening in Danish as an L2. The data and data generation will be further described in the methodology in Chapter 3, and the individual participants in Chapter 4. The outline of the dissertation can be seen in the following and last section of this introductory chapter.

1.4 Overview of the dissertation

Chapter 1 has provided an introduction to and background information on the study as well as a brief overview of previous approaches to investigating L2 listening. It has also explained the societal frame of the study and the data. The chapter further described the overall research questions of the study and the outline of the dissertation.

Chapter 2 forms the theoretical framework of the study. I here describe my view on language and learning in general and discuss relevant studies on interaction and language at work to investigate and explain L2 listening in work-related situations. I also explain in more detail what L2 listening involves and address aspects of previous studies on L2 listening relevant to this study.

Chapter 3 presents the methodological framework of the study. In this chapter, I discuss the background and general principles of qualitative choices made throughout the entire study as well as during the data analysis. I also describe the individual research tools used in the data generation and discuss how they have contributed individually as well as in combination.

Chapter 4 contains four case study portraits of international employees working at IBM Denmark and is one of the two analytical chapters of the dissertation. In this chapter, I focus on individual learners' experiences with listening in Danish as an L2, their language use at work and their investment in learning and listening in Danish.

Chapter 5 is a cross-case analysis and discussion of the entire data of the study, and is the second analytical chapter of the dissertation. In this chapter, I discuss overall tendencies of the data by addressing the research questions of the study.

Chapter 6 is the conclusion of the dissertation where I sum up the main points and findings of the study and discuss the perspectives for further research and implications for the teaching and learning of L2 listening as well as for international companies in Denmark.

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework - A holistic approach to L2 listening

In the following chapter, I outline the theoretical framework of the study. I start out by describing my approach to language and learning in general and hereafter to L2 learning with the purpose of conducting an overview of the theoretical background of the study. I then zoom in on concepts and studies relevant to investigating L2 use and learning at the workplace, which represents the specific context of the study. I then narrow the scope even further to focus on L2 listening as the specific aspect of L2 use and learning central to the study. The chapter thus starts out primarily as an outline for the theoretical basis of the study and the underlying approach to SLA, but it gradually becomes more and more related to specific aspects of the analyses in Chapters 4 and 5.

2.1 A framework for L2 learning

Learning an L2 as an adult refers to the learning of a language other than the L1(s) one was brought up with. This means that L2 learning starts later in life than L1 learning, and that L2 learners already have substantial experience and knowledge of using language(s) and of different kinds of learning. L2 learning also refers to language learning that takes place in an environment where the L2 is the dominant language. The term also covers the learners' process of acquiring new linguistic expressions and functions that enable them to participate in this social environment (Saville-Troike, 2012). A point of departure for this study is that language is both unique to the individual and shared among people, and that humans use language to think, (Lantolf, 2000) as well as communicate needs, maintain relationships and negotiate meaning. In order to do so, the individual needs to share language with others, as Jørgensen (2010) points out:

To a certain extent it is necessary that in most cases the same words are taken to refer to the same objects or concepts, that there is a high degree of agreement among the people how certain grammatical structures are formed, and what they mean, how words are pronounced, and much more. (p. 14)

Communities and groups need to have structured and shared language in order to exchange ideas and develop new concepts, but language is also structured so newcomers can learn the language used by the people around them. This, for example, means that children are not predisposed to any particular language but acquire the language used around them while they grow up. Furthermore, there is no clear distinction between where one language ends and another starts, and the learning process is continuous both for the first and second languages, in terms of knowing all words and combinations. ‘Mastering’ a language therefore refers to being able to use a language fluently and automatically for individual communicative needs at a given period of time in one’s life in relevant situations (e.g., Jørgensen, 2010).

For many adult learners, the process of learning and using an L2 involves frustration because they lack language to express themselves in the way they are used to and prefer. Adult learners’ sense of identity and agency in the social contexts in which the learning takes place are therefore as crucial for learning the L2 as cognitive resources are; resources such as attention and working memory. I hold the point of view that L2 learning is also L2 use whether used productively or receptively, and that language learning takes place in interaction with other people, but also in the mind of the individual learner, and these cognitive and social aspects of learning cannot be separated for the individual learner. Throughout this theoretical framework, I discuss how L2 learning always involves cognitive, psychological and social dimensions, and that adult learning cannot be separated from the learners’ prior experiences and identities. These concepts and understandings are also relevant to explaining why, when and how different learners listen in different situations (e.g., at work) later on.

To describe learning in a holistic way, I make use of Illeris’ (2007) multidimensional model of learning which captures how learning always involves the whole person and takes place in and because of the social environment. This means that learning involves mind as well as body, motives as well as actions, and emotions as well as knowledge and skills. However, before I describe Illeris’ model in detail in the next sections, and how I will apply it to L2 learning, it is important to address the different theoretical aspects, traditions and assumptions I draw on in this theoretical framework.

In his learning theory, Illeris (2007) combines psychological and sociological perspectives on learning, and some aspects of his approach therefore seem to clash with aspects from the more social constructivist studies on learning and language which are also used in this theoretical framework (e.g., Norton, 2000; Lantolf & Pavlenko 2001). Illeris (2007) uses the psychological concepts *motivation*, *emotion* and *volition* as the driving forces behind learning. Oppositely, Norton (2000) uses the term *investment* to capture how learners' social circumstances and histories are important to how much effort they choose to put into L2 learning, and Lantolf and Pavlenko (2001) use the term *agency* to describe the human ability to act within given social structures. Furthermore, whereas Illeris (2014) describes human *identity* as containing a core unit, which is more or less consistent in all situations and over time, Norton (2000) sees identity as individuals' experiences of their relationship with the social world, which constantly changes across time and space.

Despite the differences between the approaches, they all share an overlapping interest in human learning and the individual learners' experiences of their social surroundings. I deliberately draw on these studies with seemingly incompatible underlying assumptions because they provide different but necessary aspects to explaining adult L2 learners' and users' experiences with listening in everyday contexts. Similarly, as mentioned in Chapter 1, I make use of psycholinguistic as well as socially oriented studies on SLA to capture L2 listening in a holistic way.

As explained in Chapter 1.1, the psycholinguistic branch of SLA focuses on the mental processes involved in language learning and use. An underlying metaphor in most psycholinguistic studies is that the mind is like a computer which perceives, organizes and regulates incoming input and retrieves layered input to produce output (e.g., MacLaughlin, 1987). The mind has limited space and can only attend to a limited amount of input at a time, which requires controlled processing (Saville-Troike, 2012). All learning involves cognitive processing which can become automatic with practice and free up space for the processing of new information. With new input, the already layered learning is restructured and reorganized, and this gradually makes the learners' mental representations of prior learning more coordinated and integrated for automatic activation.

Social approaches to SLA center on L2 use and therefore often refer to L2 users instead of learners because the focus is on how the individual makes use of his or her available linguistic resources to participate in different communicative contexts rather than on the individual's acquisition of language. The social approaches to SLA as well as studies on interaction, discourse and social practice view language as embedded in social practice, and language learning as inseparable from language use. These studies therefore focus on how and why interactions are carried out the way they are, and on how interactions influence social practice and participation.

The incompatibilities between the different traditions are apparent in both research objects as well as terminology. The term *decoding*, for example refer to how language users receive and infer the intended meaning from a speaker and is an important term in the psycholinguistic studies on L2 listening as well as in more traditional linguistic studies of communication. The term is therefore in many ways incompatible with the socially informed approaches to how meaning is created among people in a specific situation. However, the term decoding can be split into the cognitive processes it seems to cover, that is, perception, recognition and interpretation of sounds, which are relevant and necessary to explaining and investigating L2 listening , also from a social perspective. Throughout the dissertation, I therefore refer to these processes instead of the term decoding.

The point of these comparisons is to show that different traditions with SLA can complement each other because they focus on different aspects of language, which are all relevant and necessary to explaining that L2 listening is cognitive as well as social. As Larsen-Freeman (2007) argues “the acquisition/use dichotomy can usefully be deconstructed” (p. 184) when investigating L2 language learning, as can the cognitive/social dichotomy. These dichotomies will be discussed in more detail at the end of the dissertation, but as a way of addressing L2 learning in all its dimensions in this theoretical chapter, I draw on Illeris' (2007) learning model as a framework. This model will be introduced in the following section.

2.2 Three dimensions of learning: content, incentive and environment

Illeris' (2007) learning model, as can be seen in Figure 2.1 below, is shaped as two double arrows showing two interrelated processes of *acquisition*, on the horizontal line, and *interaction*, on the vertical line. The arrows form a triangle that shows the three dimensions of learning present in all learning processes namely: *content*, *incentive* and *social environment*. The double arrows indicate that the dimensions mutually influence each other and the dimension at the end an arrow does not exist without the dimension at the other end.

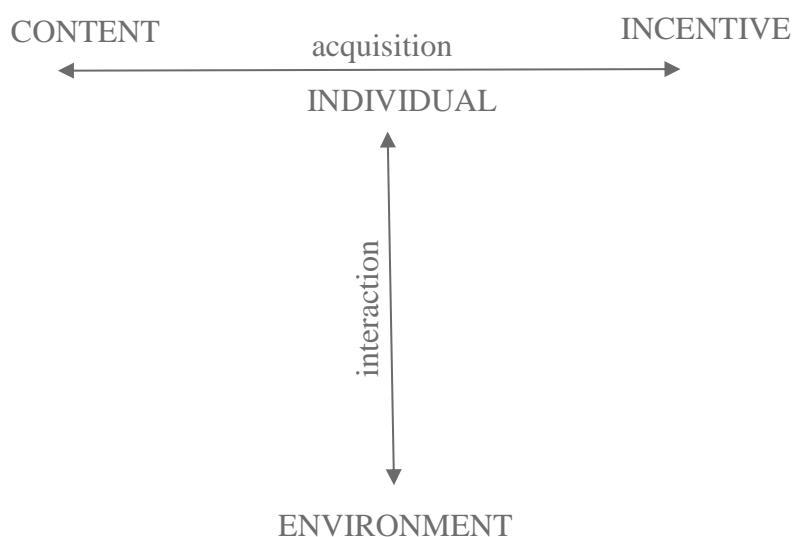


Figure 2.1. Illeris' (2007) model of the dimensions of learning

The *content* dimension refers to the object of the learning whether it is new *knowledge*, *skills*, *opinions*, *meaning* or *insight*. Through the content dimension, humans develop meaning and functionality, that is, a coherent understanding of how different aspects of life work and how to navigate and act in different situations. The content dimension thus covers aspects often referred to as cognition, cognitivism or cognitive processes, and it is the dimension that has traditionally been the primary focus in most learning studies (Illeris, 2007). The research field of SLA also focused primarily on this aspect of learning until the social turn in the 1990s, as explained in Chapter 1, and it is still the primary focus of most L2 listening studies (e.g., Goh, 2000; Vandergrift, 2003; Field, 2004).

The content of learning, from Illeris' (2007) point of view, is acquired in the mind and body of the individual learner and is determined by the human ability to learn as well as by the biological development and maturation. The mind and the central nervous system, with which we primarily learn, are specialized parts of the human body that have developed over time: The senses, skills, understandings, emotions and choices of actions are often both mental and physical and therefore cannot be separated in the acquisition process, which involves both the content and incentive dimension.

The *incentive* dimension is the learners' *motivation*, *emotions* and *volition* (willpower), and is the dimension that drives the learner's mobilization of mental energy to start and engage in the learning process. As Illeris (2007) points out, the incentive is related to the individual's well-being:

We fundamentally engage ourselves in this mobilisation in order to constantly maintain our *mental and bodily balance*. It might be uncertainty, curiosity or unfulfilled needs that cause us to seek new knowledge or new skills in order to restore the balance, and in so doing, through this dimension we simultaneously develop our *sensitivity* in relation to ourselves and our environment. (pp. 26-27)

The content and incentive dimensions together form the acquisition process of learning and the psychological processing in the mind of the individual learner, but the acquisition process only takes place because of impulses and influences from the *environment*, which constitutes the third dimension of the learning process.

The dimension related to the social environment of the learning process involves *action*, *communication* and *cooperation* to enable the learner to develop the sociality necessary to become integrated in relevant social contexts and communities. According to Illeris (2007), this involves two levels of interaction:

There is the interaction dimension of learning, which is concerned with the individual's interaction with his/her social and material environment on two levels: on the one hand, the close, social level in which the interactive situation is played, for example in a classroom or a working group, and on the other hand, the general societal level that establishes the premises for the interaction. (p. 27)

Learning takes place in the situated social contexts but cannot be separated from local, social, implicit and explicit understandings of the world and therefore involves both micro and macro context. Interaction, in Illeris' terminology, is to be seen as a broad category involving the

connection and mutual relation between the learner and the social environment. Learning takes place in a social environment and because of the impulses and influences of the social environment. It is therefore formed by the social conditions and possibilities for learning. As Illeris (2007) explains, much of the learning taking place today “would not have been possible a hundred or a thousand years ago” (p. 23) because social, cultural and historical conditions determine possibilities for learning, such as for example using a computer.

In this study, the content of the learning in focus is *L2 learning* and more specifically *L2 listening in Danish*, and in the following sections, I describe what Illeris’ (2007) three dimensions involve when the content in focus is L2 learning. Illeris’ three dimensions in this way function as an overall framework throughout this chapter for describing what L2 learning involves, how it is learned, and why learners may or may not engage in L2 learning. I start by addressing the content dimension in relation to L2 learning, and this involves describing the specific linguistic (and pragmatic) knowledge and skills required to use the L2 as well as the development of this knowledge and these skills over time. In the following section, I discuss how an L2 is acquired by means of certain learning and communication strategies. This is not part of Illeris’ dimensions of learning but is an essential aspect of L2 learning. I then address the incentive dimension of L2 learning, making use of important concepts such as motivation, identity and investment. The incentive dimension is closely connected to the dimension of social environment because language learning, as mentioned in 2.1, involves language use. The section on the dimension of social environment therefore involves concepts such as agency, power and social structures in relation to social context. After having described and discussed Illeris’ dimensions in relation to L2 learning, I discuss the workplace as the specific social context for language use and learning used in this study before describing L2 listening in more detail at the end of the chapter.

2.2.1 The content of L2 learning: Gaining communicative competence

The content of L2 learning involves acquiring knowledge, skills and understandings of how to use the L2 in different contexts. The overall goal of language learning is therefore to achieve *communicative competence*, covering all the communicative levels or scales of the L2 as well as the ability to use it fluently and appropriately in the required social situations (Lund 2006, 2009). Communicative competence includes *phrase competence*, that is, how to form

sentences by using words, syntax, morphology, phonology and orthography; *textual and discursive competence*, that is, producing different texts and genres and understanding how they are organized; *pragmatic competence*, that is, knowing how communication is used for different purposes; and *sociocultural insight*, that is, how to use language in specific settings and situations. See Figure 2.2 below.

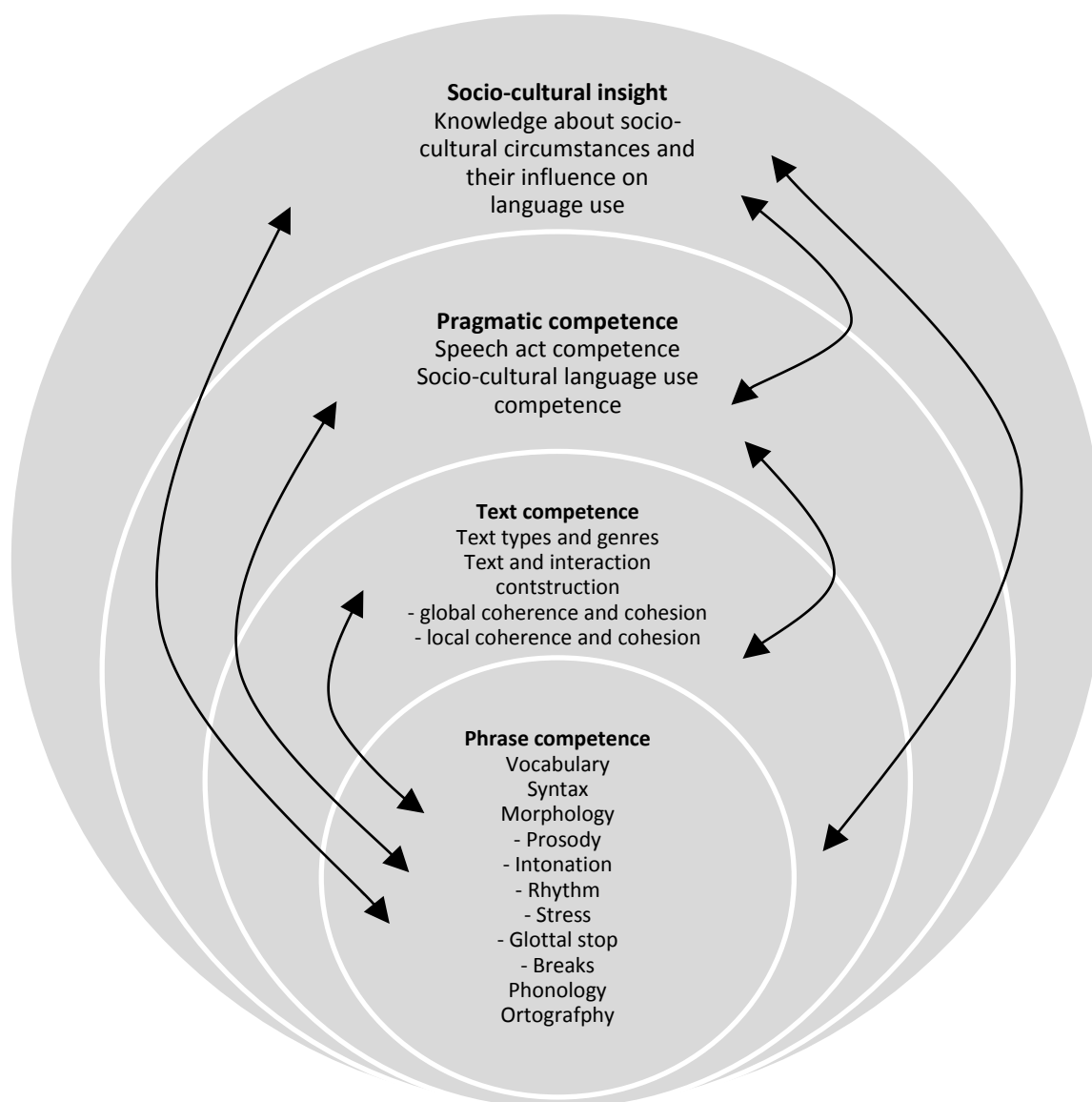


Figure 2.2. Lund's (2009) model of communicative competence (my translation)

As Figure 2.2 shows, the different layers of competence in Lund's (2009) model of communicative competence are all mutually related in the sense that how words and texts are used in specific situations depends on the sociocultural surroundings. This means that when language users produce language, they have to consider how to express themselves depending on when and where the language is used, and what they want to say. By contrast, when trying to comprehend language, they make use of all of their knowledge of linguistic, textual and pragmatic functions to recognize and interpret what is said. L1 users make use of the different aspects of communicative competence more or less automatically depending on the situation, but L2 learners may lack substantial competence at all the different levels depending on their cultural and linguistic background.

Lund (2009) further lists three overarching phases that characterize language acquisition: *the word collecting phase; the fill out and grammar phase; and the phase of sophistication, nuancing and complexity (my translation)*. The first phase takes place at the beginning of the acquisition process when learners collect vocabulary, e.g., nouns and verbs, which refers to concrete content and covers a wide semantic and pragmatic spectrum (Lund, 2009, p. 102). In the second phase, the learners "grammaticalize" their language and develop more coherent structures and sentences, and in the third phase, the learners develop competence for different communicative purposes, such as using the language for school or work as well as for more complex interactions such as discussions. Lund claims that all learners follow these phases, but that the phases leave room for variability for individuals and groups of language learners.

Similarly, Larsen-Freeman (2010) describes language learning as a gradual expansion of the learners' language patterns which develops as a complex system through and because of frequent language use, where the learners in social situations meet and register patterns within the system:

Such patterns exist at every level of scale from phonemes to lexical items, phrases, idioms, non-canonical collocations, grammar constructions, conversational structures etc. As learners revisit the same territory again and again, they perceive and begin to recognize patterns at these levels of scale; they register in memory. (p. 44)

The patterns become stable when they have been apprehended and layered in memory but should be seen as a "dynamic ensemble" (Larsen-Freeman, 2010, p. 44) of a system that

constantly develops and changes as a result of language use. This means that the system individual learners develop are connections based on prior knowledge and experiences in negotiation and participation in a dynamic world:

Learning is not so much the taking in of linguistic forms by learners as it is the constant adaptation and enactment of language-using patterns as learners/users make meaning and respond to the affordances that emerge in a dynamic communication situation. Thus, this view assumes that language development is not about learning and manipulating abstract symbols, but is enacted in real-life experiences, such as when two or more interlocutors co-adapt during an interaction. (p. 53)

The mental processes and the social environment mutually constitute each other, and different scales of communicative aspects develop simultaneously and in an interconnected manner according to the individual learner's needs. The learner notices language in production and comprehension, and over time, the learner readjusts the language system through language use, thus developing a stable ensemble which frees mental capacity to focus on new aspects of the language, which in turn adjust the previous patterns in the dynamic system. The system constantly adapts to and is adapted in new situations, and this process allows the learner to develop competence and more resources to use the language in different social contexts; in other words, he or she advances and becomes more proficient in the L2.

According to Illeris (2007), individuals make use of all prior learning that forms the individual's competence, experience and identity when they are learning something new. Prior learning is organized in the mind in the form of schemas or traces, including knowledge and emotional memories, which are activated in specific contexts when subjectively found relevant to make sense of a situation or act or communicate. The more often individuals are exposed to a specific learning process or make use of already learned skills or knowledge, the more easily this learned schema or trace is activated and retrieved. In this way, learning is a sorting and structuring mechanism that automatizes specific knowledge, skills or understandings useful or necessary to us. In other words, we draw on necessary knowledge and skills unconsciously using very little mental energy.

These aspects of learning are similar to the way psycholinguistic studies on L2 listening, explain listening and learners' construction of meaning in the mind (as also mentioned in Section 2.1). How L2 listening works will be further addressed in Section 2.6, but how learning is structured in the mind is relevant for explaining that the development of

communicative competence not only involves ‘collecting’ different linguistic resources for different communicative situations but also the cognitive ability to do so. Language learning therefore involves acquiring both *declarative and procedural knowledge*, which means knowing that different words, sounds and phrases are used in different social contexts (declarative knowledge) and how to perform these communicative actions of producing and comprehending language (procedural knowledge) (e.g., O’Malley & Chamot, 1990).

As the terms indicate, declarative knowledge can be declared or explicated while procedural knowledge cannot as it refers to the ability to perform different procedures or actions. Procedural knowledge, such as using a language, may involve acquiring declarative knowledge, which over time, and because of repeated use, becomes proceduralized and thus automatic. An L2 beginner may, for example, have to focus consciously on the intonation when listening to the L2 in order to divide the sound stream into words, or she may have to remind herself to express politeness in a specific way in a given L2 situation. With practice, these controlled actions can become automatic, as also explained in Section 2.1.

In the initial phases of L2 learning, the learner consciously tries to adapt to and participate in different communicative situations, which is mentally demanding, but over time, the processes become automatized and no longer require conscious attention. In this learning process, the learner gradually develops (communicative) competence by developing hypotheses and metalinguistic knowledge of how the language works; he or she also reaches more automatized language (patterns) (Holmen, 1996). In this process, the learner uses different strategies to learn and communicate, as will be further addressed in the next section.

2.2.2 Acquiring and using the content of an L2: Strategies for L2 learning and L2 use

An important aspect of language learning, which is not clear when applying Illeris’ (2007) general learning framework to L2 learning, is *how* learners learn. That is, how learners use already acquired skills and knowledge to acquire new skills and knowledge, and whether actions and strategies for learning are part of the content of learning or part of the interaction with the social environment. In this section, I therefore discuss actions for L2 learning and L2 use necessary for learning an L2. As I will show, it is not entirely clear in the studies on strategies and L2 learning whether strategies are acquired during the language learning

process as a way of using the language, or are actions for learning the language. Furthermore, there is more or less general consensus within SLA studies that learners use strategies in the L2 learning process, but there is less agreement on whether strategies for L2 learning can and should be taught directly; whether good strategies lead to learning success; and whether some strategies for learning and using the L2 are better than others.

Generally speaking, *L2 language learning strategies* involve strategies for helping the learner learn. This may involve social strategies for choosing to communicate with others, and thereby involve L2. By contrast, strategies for L2 use are usually referred to as *communication strategies* and are often considered management of problems in L2 communication (Nakatani & Goh, 2005), which may lead to L2 learning. Therefore, both types of strategies are relevant when investigating what L2 learners do while listening.

The notion of learning strategies was originally used within cognitive psychology but was transferred and adapted for the purpose of explaining the process of L2 language by O'Malley and Chamot (1990). They defined learning strategies as "special ways of processing information that enhance comprehension, learning, or retention of the information" (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 1) and described three different kinds of strategies: (a) *metacognitive strategies*, which involve reflecting on how to approach the learning by planning, monitoring and evaluating one's learning; (b) *cognitive strategies*, which involve different techniques for enhancing comprehension or acquisition by organizing information, using previous knowledge or forming mental pictures; and (c) *social/affective strategies*, which involve interacting with others by, for example, asking for clarification (social strategy), and controlling one's affections while learning (affective strategy).

Strategies for language learning are related to the concept of The Good Language Learner (GLL), which is a widely used concept in SLA studies to capture what successful learners do (Rubin, 1975; Naiman et al, 1978). Learning strategies are therefore often linked to *learning style* and *personality*. Learning style is often described as *cognitive style*, which refers to learners' preferred ways of processing information. Learning style or cognitive style is often referred to in dichotomies, such as field dependent versus field independent, global versus analytical, impulsive versus reflective. These styles are considered relatively stable across different learning tasks (Wong & Nunan, 2011), and even though many learners are

somewhere in between these opposites, they seem to have an overall preference for one style over the other within each dichotomy. As Griffiths (2008) explains:

It appears that every learner does have a learning style, consisting of a unique blend of instructional and environmental preferences, of information processing preferences, and of preferences related to personality. Stylistic preferences seem to be relatively stable; however, successful learners do seem to be able to adapt their learning styles to accommodate the requirements of a particular learning task or situation. And no one style which typifies good language learners has been identified. (p. 57)

Similar to learning style, *personality traits* are often referred to in dichotomies, such as extrovert versus introvert, thinking versus feeling (Ehrman, 2008), and the notion of style is used to refer to both cognitive style, sensory style and personality style (see Wong & Nunan, 2011). In general, good language learners are often considered to be self-confident, risk-takers and tolerant of ambiguity. Oxford (1990), for example, has argued that successful learners are willing to use the language, willing to guess and willing to make mistakes.

According to Saville-Troike (2012), most research on learner personality traits has focused on anxiety as opposed to self-confidence, risk-taking and adventurous behaviors (p. 96), and some studies within SLA have hypothesized that extrovert learners are more successful learners. There is, however, no evidence for the advantage of the extrovert personality trait, and Nel (2008) even claims that introverts are actually better learners because they are intuitive as well as “logical and precise thinkers who are able to exercise judgment” (p. 61). In addition, Norton and Toohey (2001) argue, from a social approach to SLA, that the concept of the GLL needs to be reconsidered in relation to the social context in which the L2 is being learned and used. Anxiety and extroversion are not just stable personality traits but context-dependent state-of-minds related to the learners’ motives for learning and investment in the language learning. This will be further addressed in Section 2.2.3, which deals with adult identity, motivation and investment.

Communication strategies for L2 use, on the other hand, are primarily described as related to the productive side of L2 language use and refer to the ways in which the L2 learner tries to interact by paraphrasing, code switching or using body language to communicate with the available linguistic and communicative means they have. Færch and Kasper (1983) defined communication strategies as “potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual

presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal” (p. 36), thereby describing communication strategies as compensatory strategies for lack of communicative competence in L2.

Canale and Swain’s (1980) notion of *strategic competence* also refers to an individual’s ability to compensate for lack of linguistic competence, whereas scholars such Bialystok (1990) argue that communication strategies in L2 use cannot be described as only compensatory because strategies for communicating are used all the time and may therefore be regarded as an inherent part of all human communication. This is also a well-known perspective in studies on L1 communication (Dörnyei, 1997). (Communication) strategies for L2 use and strategies for L2 learning therefore seem to differ because of the *goal* of using them, but they also differ in terms of whether they are *conscious* and *compensatory* or not.

Another important aspect of strategies for L2 learning and use is that strategies may be used *routinely* because of prior learning experiences and may therefore be automatic and not always conscious. A strategy may therefore not necessarily be the most fruitful strategy in a given situation, and it may not be possible to differentiate whether a learner is using a strategy for learning, communicating or participating in social situations, for example, for positioning herself in a favorable situation. In line with this, Jang and Jimenez (2011) claim that strategies for language learning and strategies for obtaining other goals, such as participating in social situations or creating identities, overlap. In their study, adolescent students make use of both cognitive and metacognitive strategic activities in class “with the purpose of silencing another student” (p. 143), and Jang and Jaminez therefore point out that cognitively oriented studies on language learning strategies often fail to take account of context and power relations. They further argue that learners’ cultural backgrounds can affect their goals and desires as well as their behaviors and activities in different situations.

Donato and McCormick (1994) also point out that an action can only be strategic when it is used to obtain a goal, indicating that strategic actions are always motivated by a goal, which points actions in a certain direction. According to Donato and McCormick, strategies therefore include a motivational as well as an operational level, which may or may not be implemented. Furthermore, the operational level can become routinized and automatic but also conscious goal-directed actions again if the learner is confronted with something difficult. Donato and McCormick therefore point out that strategies for language learning

cannot be listed as stable categories, as, for example, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) did, because language learning *is* social practice, situated in specific situations and thus dependent on the individual learner's experience of these situations. Furthermore, language learning strategies are goal-directed actions for participating in a language learning community, such as the classroom. That is, they are actions that learners use for becoming competent members of a specific community. Strategy use is therefore not (necessarily) generalizable behavior because different communities may require different strategies and create different possibilities for participating and learning.

Jang and Jaminez' (2011) and Donato and McCormick's (1994) social approaches to SLA and language learning strategies highlight the social context of language learning by pointing out how strategy use is dynamic and develops and changes across time and space. These studies therefore supplement the general strategies listed in the psycholinguistic studies in a fruitful way. All learners seem to have general strategies at their disposal, but the context and the individual purpose of using strategies play a role in what strategies learners choose to use. Furthermore, learners need to have a goal of operationalizing strategies. In the next section, I discuss learners' overall goals and incentives to learn language.

2.2.3 Incentives for L2 learning: Adult identity, motivation and investment

What drives L2 learning and why some learners are more successful than others have for many years been related to the concept of *motivation*. Some of the first to introduce the concept of motivation to L2 learning were Gardner and Lambert (1972), who divided motivation into *instrumental and integrative* motivation; instrumental being driven by the motivation to for example get a job, and integrative being driven by the learner's wish to learn about and participate in the L2 community. Even though learners' goals of L2 learning can still be described as primarily instrumental and integrative in some cases, the division has become significantly more nuanced over the years. Most contemporary SLA studies relate motivation to identity and the individual learners' perception of themselves and who they want to become, but the studies differ and disagree on whether motivation for L2 learning can be ascribed to learners' personal goals or are an inherent part of learners' social circumstances and possibilities. In socially informed approaches to SLA, the incentive dimension of L2

learning is therefore hard to separate from the dimension of social environment when using Illeris' (2007) learning model.

As previously explained, learners cannot acquire new knowledge, skills or understandings without an incentive to learn. Adult learners are reluctant to learn something they do not see the point of, whereas children learn what is available for them to learn and when their biological maturation allows them to. The primary difference between learning as a child and learning as an adult is an adult's ability to choose and select what to learn, and adults in principle only learn what they want to learn and what is meaningful for them to learn (Illeris, 2003). Illeris' (2007) places *identity* as central to all learning, similar to socially informed SLA studies, and explains identity as "the individually specific essence of total learning, i.e. as the coherent development of meaning, functionality, sensitivity and sociality" (p. 138). Illeris' view on identity is similar to his view on learning and involves a combination of psychological and sociological aspects on learning. He regards identity as both the social identity people present to others and the individuals' self-concept, and he describes identity as including both dynamic and stable units.

Illeris' (2014) concept of identity is therefore different from that of the social approaches to SLA in that he describes identity as having at least three layers, including a core unit as the most stable layer surrounded by a personality layer and then preference layers. By contrast, social constructivist views on identity, such as Norton's (2000), see identities as dynamic and flexible and as dependent on the social surroundings and the learners' experience of social circumstances. Illeris' identity concept adds relevant aspects to the social approaches because it can be used to explain why people experience themselves and others as having stable personalities. It also accounts for why L2 learning is hard for adult learners' self-concept.

Illeris (2014) argues that a core identity is established already during the first months of an individual's life. Over time, this core identity forms the individual's "idea of being a unique and specific person" on the basis of more fundamental characteristics such as "gender, family relations, environmental conditions, appearance, characteristics, temperament, desires, emotionality and so on" (p. 156). The personality layer involves how the individual relates to others and the surrounding environment, and a change in the personality layer involves a change in "our meaning perspectives, frames of reference, and habits of mind" (p. 157). The preference layers involve how the individual deals with everyday situations and changes in

this layer are not specifically important to the individual but still require mobilizing the energy to change.

Adults are often reluctant to engage in learning that requires a large amount of mental energy, and Illeris (2014) argues that our mobilization of energy to involve ourselves in learning depends on “how close to the core identity the changes are subjectively experienced to be” (p. 157). The core identity layer is so deeply embedded in an individual’s personal and social life and therefore more or less impossible to change, whereas changes in the personality layer can often be regarded as *transformative* because the personality layer is so close to the core. Illeris’ (2007, 2014) concept of transformative learning is relevant to explaining why many adult learners find it difficult to mobilize the energy to engage in L2 learning. This is because transformative learning involves restructuring an individual’s mental organization of meaning and understanding. Transformative learning therefore also includes some kind of restructuring of the individual’s self-concept, and, in most cases, learning an L2 involves acting and communicating in a way that many adults regard as inconsistent with how they prefer to present themselves. Transformative learning often takes place in crisis situations, such as divorce or unemployment, when finding a way of coping is the only solution. For that reason, adults often protect themselves from transformative learning because it is overwhelming to engage in.

Many adult L2 learners therefore struggle with the identity work that L2 learning requires because it feels like a change in identity, or a “reduced personality” (Harder, 1980), at least for a period of time. People seek to position and construct themselves in the best possible way in interactions with others by putting on their best *face* (Goffman 1967), and learning and communicating in an L2 may require losing control over how to present oneself. Arnfast (2007), for example, shows that being unable to communicate can be humiliating and may compromise fundamental needs, such as asking for help. Adult L2 learners of Danish may, for example, choose to make use of English in Danish L2 situations to present themselves in the best possible way and participate more equally in communication (see also Øhrstrøm, 2010).

Learners’ engagement in the learning process is dynamic and flexible, and learners may focus on different aspects of the learning at different points in time. Language learners may even choose to focus on specific skills of the L2 according to their needs for participating in different social situations and how they want to be perceived by others (McKay & Wong,

1996). Strategies for L2 learning and L2 use are therefore, as mentioned in the previous Section 2.2.2, often difficult to separate and may depend on learners' goals of learning and participation in different social settings, but strategy use also depends on learners' possibilities for acting and learning. For most people to decide to learn and use an L2, they need a clear incentive, and according to Lantolf and Pavlenko (2001), people have different histories and experiences which influence their motives for learning, and these motives are related to "the significance language and language study have for the individuals in their lives as humans" (p. 146). What a learner's specific goal or motive for learning is, is therefore less relevant than how significant the learning is experienced to be, and this may change depending on time and place.

Dörnyei (2009) argues that what keeps learners on track in their learning process is their personal goal of learning an L2 as well as who they want to be and who they fear they may become (see also Markus & Nurius, 1986). Dörnyei introduces the concepts *ideal self* and *ought-to self*, the ideal self for describing who the learner wants to be in the future, and the ought-to self for describing "the attributes that one believes one ought to possess to meet expectations and to avoid possible negative outcomes" (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 29). Dörnyei uses the concepts to describe what drives successful learners. He claims that learners are most likely to succeed in the L2 learning if they perceive their ideal self as possible to reach and have a clear vision of who they would like to become; the ought-to self serves the purpose of pushing the learning forward.

Norton (2000), on the other hand, argues that language and social practice mutually constitute each other, and that the possibilities for language use and language learning are dependent on social circumstances. She introduces the concept *investment*, which "signals the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language, and their often ambivalent desire to learn and practice it" (p. 10). While Dörnyei (2009) uses the concept *motivation* to describe individual learners' personal drive for learning, Norton (2000) uses *investment* and focuses on the learners' social circumstances as essential for the learners' goals and choices in language learning, and Illeris (2007) uses the notion *incentive* to cover motivation, emotion and volition. However, the three perspectives all add relevant aspects to adult L2 learning.

Illeris' (2007) framework is a general overview of what dimensions must be present in learning, not *how* learning is actually acquired, and the incentive dimension in his learning model therefore involves the goals and the motives behind the learning not the actions involved in actually acquiring the learning. Throughout the dissertation, I will primarily make use of the term investment (Norton, 2000) because, in my point of view, it best describes the risk and effort L2 learning requires as well as the specific social and individual circumstances involved. However, I also draw on Dörnyei's (2009) concepts of ideal and ought-to selves because they are relevant to describing learners' personal goals as well as general concepts of what a good language learner, in my participants' point of view, ought to do. One might also argue that motivation and incentive can be seen as the driving force behind the investment in learning an L2. Furthermore, the notion of investment seems especially useful when it comes to learning an L2 because language is a priceless resource for participating in the social world and for engaging in further learning. In the next section, I relate the incentive dimension to the interaction dimension in relation to L2 learning.

2.2.4 The dimension of social environment in L2 learning: Situated learning and social context

As previously mentioned, Illeris' (2007) interaction dimension of learning covers how learning takes place in specific social contexts and is driven by impulses from the social environment. These two levels constitute, respectively, a micro-level context and a more overall societal macro context. This point of view is similar to Lave and Wenger's (1991) *situated learning*, which is a concept often used within SLA studies to describe how learning takes place in specific situated practices but at the same time cannot be separated from previous learning activities and the sociocultural context. Lave and Wenger (1991) describe situated learning as *legitimate peripheral participation* to show that learning involves the individual's strive to participate in different *communities of practice*. The learner is seen as a *newcomer* who gradually develops the skills and knowledge required to participate in legitimate ways in the community of practice, which consists of individuals who have developed a specific sociocultural practice as a way of acting and communicating in, for example, a sports team, a language classroom or a team at a workplace.

The notion of *legitimacy* is also used in Norton's (2000) study in relation to Bourdieu's (1977) concepts of *legitimate language* and *legitimate discourse*. Norton uses the concept *legitimate speakers* to describe how communication always involves power and how learners have to struggle to even be considered legitimate and possible interlocutors by target language speakers. As she explains:

Bourdieu suggests that the value ascribed to speech cannot be understood apart from the person who speaks, and the person who speaks cannot be understood apart from larger networks of social relationships. His position is that the linguist (and, I would argue, many applied linguists) take for granted the conditions for the establishment of communication: that those who speak regard those who listen as worthy to listen, and that those who listen regard those who speak as worthy to speak'. (p. 8)

Norton (1995, 2000), like Bourdieu (1977), argues that communicative competence needs to include "the right to speak" because communication is not always equal, nor do the participants always try to listen to and understand each other. Norton's notion of investment is therefore related to Bourdieu's concepts *capital* and *power*, and he is thus aiming to capture that language *is* capital and power.

Having (the right) language means having power and resources for creating meaning and constructing identities for oneself but also for others. In Denmark, for example, 'the right language' is in many situations considered to be (the 'right kind' of) Danish, (e.g. Jørgense, 2010) and English is considered the language of internationalization (Haberland, 2014). In this study, the international employees in focus already have symbolic capital in the form of their jobs in Denmark and their proficiency in English (see also Cameron, 2002; Heller, 2010). Their need for learning Danish as an L2 is therefore different and less crucial to their participation at the workplace than learning English as an L2 is for the learners in Norton's (2001) study, who struggle to participate in the Canadian society in general. Moreover, as mentioned in Chapter 1, professional migrants and international employees have very different opportunities and agency than other migrants, and being able to choose between languages for communication is only possible in global international workplaces where interlocutors share the same status (Roberts, 2010).

However, the notion of legitimacy is still relevant to describing how my participants have to find a legitimate way of communicating at the workplace, whether this involves using Danish

or English or other languages. Legitimate discourse involves both legitimate speakers and legitimate receivers or listeners, and the notion of *legitimate listener* is relevant in this study to describe how an L2 learner also has to ‘earn’ a certain position in a community of practice in order to be regarded as worthy to be spoken to (in Danish). Legitimacy is therefore closely connected with *agency*, which, according to Lantolf and Pavlenko (2001), is the human ability to act within the surrounding social structures.

Lantolf and Pavlenko (2001) argue that learners are social actors who constantly make choices and decisions about their actions and these actions are driven by motives to reach certain goals. Learning an L2 therefore requires *agency*, which similar to other important postmodern concepts in SLA, such as identities and power, is co-constructed and constantly renegotiated in social settings; it is thus relational rather than individual. Learners have agency to act within social structures and are also, to a certain extent, able to change and influence their circumstances and surroundings, but many social norms and circumstances are part of people’s common sense understanding of the world and are so fully embedded in ways of living, thinking and acting that they are rarely or never questioned. A specific learning situation and learning activity is therefore unique and takes place in a specific time and space, but the activity is embedded in shared and general understandings of meaning of how the world works both implicitly and explicitly.

Learning a language differs from other kinds of learning because language is used for learning and for communicating to others what we learn. Language thus plays a double role in L2 learning in the sense that it is both the content of the learning and the tool for learning. In this way, the interaction dimension in Illeris’ (2007) learning framework becomes even more literal when the content of learning is language. In this way *interaction* does not only include how learning takes place in interaction with and because of the social environment but also interaction in the sense of producing and comprehending language in and for *communication*. L2 language learning takes place in communities of practice because learners need and want to participate in these social environments where the L2 is used and required. In these situations of L2 use for L2 learning, learners make use of the *context* as well as the linguistic *co-text* to create meaning (see Halliday & Hasan, 1991).

Madsen’s (2008) description of the different levels of *context* involved in language use are useful for describing how interlocutors create context on the basis of *brought along*

experiences as well as how context is *brought about* in the specific interaction (see also Bremer et al., 1996). Madsen explains that specific situated language use takes place in communities of practice embedded in a discursive field of global and societal discourses, values, codes and ideologies, thus constituting a micro, mezzo and macro layer of context relevant for (socio)linguistic analysis. According to Madsen, specific local interactions can only be understood in relation to the conversational frame of the interaction. This interactional frame involves what type of interaction it is, the relationships and former interactions between the participants, the institutional and global context, which form the frame of the interactions, and the “identities possibly made relevant, reproduced, or negotiated” (p. 68).

Language and the social world are mutually constituent, and how people communicate is dependent on what they want to say to whom, when and where but also on their ability and possibility of communicating in these settings. Togeby’s (1977) schematic overview of how social relations and the form of an interaction shape each other is also useful for describing the parameters of context that influence language use and thus also the possibilities of language learning. See Table 2.1 below.

	Symmetry		Asymmetry
	Informal	Formal	
Participants	Few people, similarity in taste, attitudes, ideology, destiny (age, residence, gender, income, job)	Many people, differences in age, residence, gender, income, job (taste, attitude, ideology)	Differences in age, gender, income, job
Place	Close, small places, private	Distance, big places, public	Up, in front of, down, behind
Time	Leisure, breaks	Work	Always
Feelings	Trust, sympathy, friendliness	Indifference, distrust, unfriendliness	Superiority, inferiority
Behavior	Frequent interaction, cooperation	Rare interaction, competition	Impact, power, control
Subject	Private	Public	The relation of the involved

Table 2.1. Ole Togeby’s (1977) table on how the form of an interaction determines and is determined by the social relations in the interaction (my translation)

Interactions can be more or less symmetric depending on the six non-linguistic features: *participants, place, time, feelings, behavior* and *subject*, which are general parameters that influence all social interaction. Togeby's (1977) table shows that language and the social context are mutually constituent. His framework, however, does not include the linguistic *co-text*, which is the literal text that constitutes the verbal environment of a word, an utterance or an interaction. *Context* is a much debated concept within SLA studies as well as sociolinguistics. *Co-text*, on the other hand, is rarely referred to separately within studies on language use but more often in studies on language learning. It is a relevant concept when it comes to discussing L2 listening and how L2 learners create meaning in situations of L2 use. How people communicate and understand each other is equally dependent on what was said in the interaction right before, whether a conversation started out of the blue, or whether the listener walked into a room in the middle of a conversation.

Last but not least, language use can also be tied to the physical context, which naturally also influences L2 (learning and) comprehension. *Context embedded* language is more closely connected with the specific context in the sense that the text is supported by cues, such as visual clues or body language that link the content of the text to the context (Cummins, 1982). In communication, speakers use *contextualization cues* (Gumperz, 1992) to construct meaning, avoid ambiguity and guide the listeners' interpretations by "drawing in taken-for-granted knowledge and creating, local situated meanings" (Bremer et al., 1996, p.26). It is usually assumed that everyday communication is more context embedded and involves less complex language than, for example, tasks in the language classroom or academic lectures. For that reason, everyday communication is less cognitively demanding (Cummins, 1982). However, as I will show in the following section, all types of communication involve negotiation of social identity, and some everyday interactions may be difficult to participate in because of positioning, power relations and unclear roles among the interlocutors rather than because of the specific language used. In the following section, I zoom in on forms of interaction taking place at the workplace, which represents the specific context of my study, to describe and discuss the social possibilities of listening and participating in different situations at work

2.3 Interactions at the workplace

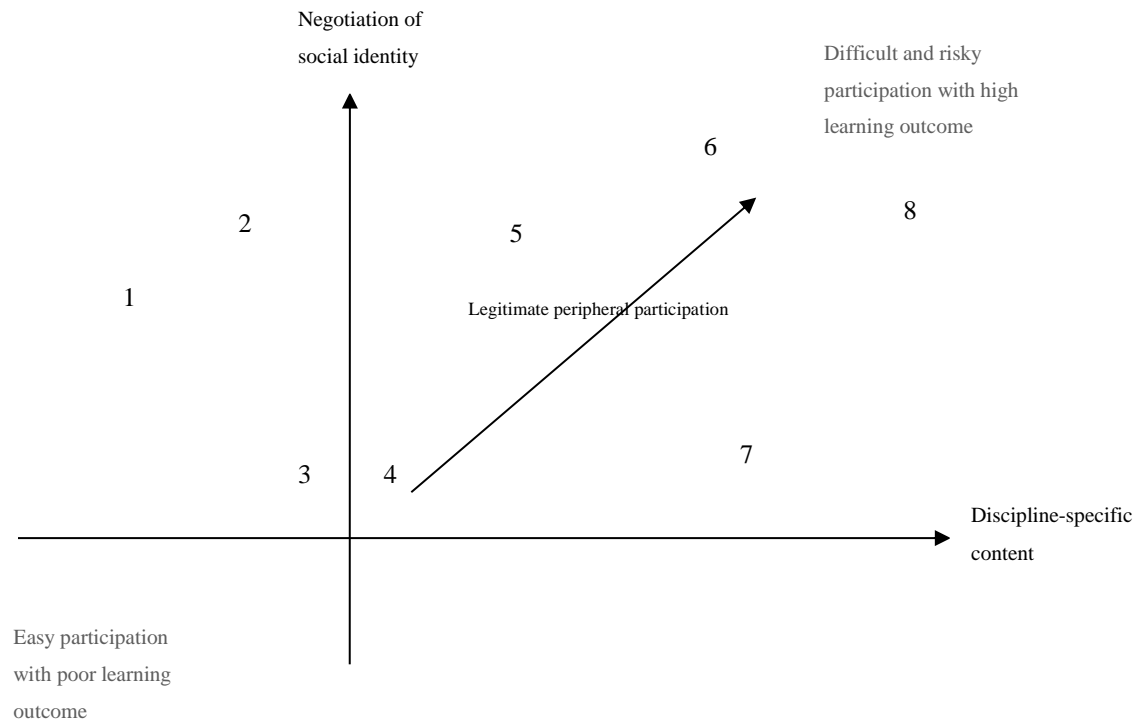
Togeby's (1977) parameters of social context, which influence forms of interaction, as described in the previous section, are divided into formal and informal interactions as well as symmetric and asymmetric interactions. Togeby uses examples such as a discussion among friends to illustrate an informal, symmetric interaction, and classroom teaching to illustrate a formal, asymmetric interaction. Whether an interaction is formal or informal, symmetric or asymmetric depends on the parameters shown in Table 2.1 above.

An informal, symmetric interaction, for example, usually involves interlocutors with similar status, attitudes and age, who have sympathy for each other and interact regularly about private matters. This type of interaction takes place in non-work-related situations in a narrow space in contrast to more formal and asymmetric interactions. Parameters similar to Togeby's (1977) are used in studies on language at work to describe the forms of interactions that take place among interlocutors on different occasions and at different locations at the workplace. I therefore make use of Togeby's parameters throughout this study as an example of what influences language use including L2 listening in work-related situations. The purpose of this section is to show that interactions take place in a variety of formal or informal situations at work, and that formality is not the only parameter influencing how language is used at the workplace.

Language is essential for both professional and social purposes at a workplace, and as Sandwall (2013) puts it, communication at work can generally be described as balancing the act of getting the work done properly and effectively while being polite and considerate of each other in order to create and maintain a comfortable social environment (p. 36). However, being efficient and polite are general communicative principles which may clash in some interactions because of interlocutors' independent goals of an interaction combined with different sociocultural conventions and expectations of the communicative tasks involved (Lund, 2009). Many studies on language at work refer to Gumperz' (1964) overall division of *transactional* and *relational* interactions depending on the goal of the interaction (e.g., Holmes, 2000; Sandwall, 2013). Transactional interactions at the workplace are related to getting the work done, and, as the term indicates, to transferring information, such as giving instructions or reporting results. Relational interactions at the workplace, for example, involve small talk and are used to create and maintain social relations.

Søgaard Sørensen and Holmen (2004) provide a more nuanced description of the types of interactions taking place at eight Danish workplaces in their study on adult L2 learners' possibilities for learning and using Danish at work. They describe the interactions at the eight Danish workplaces as dependent on two parameters: degree of discipline-specific content and degree of negotiation of social identity, as illustrated in Figure 2.3 below. Their categorization is a good example of how difficult it can be for newcomers in a community of practice, such as the workplace, to figure out how to (inter)act in different communicative situations. The amount of discipline-specific content increases with the numbers in the model, and the model shows that not all interactions involve discipline-specific content, but all interactions involve negotiation of social identity. Søgaard Sørensen and Holmen's (2004) model therefore shows that language at work is not only a matter of professional versus social talk but also a matter of social identity and power relations.

Many of the forms of interactions Søgaard Sørensen and Holmen (2004) observed in their study were mixtures of talk with professional and 'social' content. As Figure 2.3 shows, the higher the degree of both discipline-specific content and negotiation of social identity, the riskier and more difficult it is for the L2 learners to participate. Furthermore, interactions with a high degree of negotiation of social identity and low level of discipline-specific content may be just as difficult to participate in as interactions with a high degree of discipline-specific content but low level of social identity negotiation.



1. **Small talk** – talk with little significance in relation to work performance but possibly with more negotiation of social identity and power relations.
2. **Social understanding** – talk with little discipline-specific content dominated by underlying influence of social identity.
3. **Ritualized talk** – talk with fixed patterns and clear social roles.
4. **Kakafoni** – talk dominated by disconnected utterances with a mixture of professional and social content but with relatively low meaning potential.
5. **Story-telling** - talk aimed at creating a sense of solidarity, including implicit negotiation of social identity, and thus involves highly including (as well as excluding) elements.
6. **Negotiation** – talk which, on the surface, is aimed at the organization of work but, below the surface, is dominated by the negotiation of social identity and power relations.
7. **Instruction** – verbal as well as nonverbal communication directly related to work activities.
8. **Professional understanding / problem-solving** – concentrated talk with high content of meaning aimed at problem solving.

Figure 2.3. Søgaaard Sørensen and Holmen's (2004) model of forms of interactions at Danish workplaces identified in their study (my translation)

Søgaaard Sørensen and Holmen (2004) point out that even though some of the learners in their study have gained legitimate positions at the workplace by being hired in the first place, they are not necessarily granted access to the community of practice in, for example, the work team because of lack of acceptance from the colleagues. In addition, it seems that the Danish

colleagues are more accepting of the newcomers'/learners' lack of discipline-specific knowledge than lack of language and they expect the learners to show when they do not understand. However, the learners are reluctant to show lack of understanding because of fear of losing *face* in an already asymmetric situation.

As mentioned earlier, face is related to identity and to how people want to be perceived in social situations and in communication, and in general, people work hard to “stay in face” and “put on their best face” to be perceived in their most favourable way (see Goffman, 1967). What is perceived as being *face-threatening* differs from person to person and situation to situation, but as previously explained, communicating in an L2 is a face-threatening affair for many adult learners because they lack linguistic as well as sociocultural knowledge and resources to participate. Most people want to stay in face especially in work-related situations because they want to be regarded as professional, and something as crucial as their job and their general well-being may be at stake (in line with Illeris' (2014) concept of transformative learning as well as Norton's (2002) study of immigrant woman in Canada). Furthermore, an individual's professional identity, which according to Sandwall (2013) is related to fulfilling a job, being at the workplace and having a job at all (p.33), cannot necessarily be separated from other aspects of an individual's identity, such as being a woman or a mother (see Norton, 2000). Being accepted as a legitimate participant in a workplace community is therefore important to most people's self-concepts.

As Søgaaard Sørensen and Holmen's (2004) study showed, all interactions are 'social' in the sense that they involve some degree of negotiation of social identity. They further showed that interactions with a high degree of both discipline-specific content and negotiation of social identity involve a particularly high risk of losing face for the newcomers/learners because of norms and unwritten rules the newcomers/learners may be unaware of and cannot deduce. Interactions during a break may, for example, involve a mix of remarks and discussions about both work-related, transactional matters and 'social,' relational matters, but break interactions may also involve direct work-related instructions or be entirely small talk oriented with no work-related topics.

Holmes and Stubbe (2003) similarly describe how 'social' talk takes place all the time at work even within official work-related situations, such as meetings, and argue that 'social' talk is used to develop and strengthen collegial relationships but also to soften transitions

during the work day, such as when starting or ending the workday or a meeting. A change of formality during a work day, such as going from a meeting to lunch, therefore usually involves a change in the genre, style and goal of the interaction, which may also mean a switch between languages. Language choices and participant roles will be further described and discussed in the next section. They are both essential to investigating L2 listening in Danish and to learning more about when Danish is actually used at international workplaces in Denmark.

2.4 Language choice and participant roles

When investigating L2 listening in Danish at work, it is relevant to determine who is spoken to and what language is used at workplaces in Denmark. In this section, I therefore discuss important findings from studies conducted at workplaces similar to the ones in my study and relate them to the investigation of international employees' L2 listening at work. Particularly relevant is Lønsmann's (2011) study on language use at the Danish Pharmaceutical company Lundbeck, a large international company in Denmark with English as a corporate language but many Danish employees. Her discussion of *language choices* between Danish and English and *participant roles* is valuable to my description of the (possible) listening situations the participants in my study encounter at work.

Lønsmann (2011) shows that the choices between Danish and English at an international workplace are complex and dependent on who is listening. Lønsmann (2011) makes use of Bell's (1984) audience design to explain language choices at the workplace. Bell's audience design involves four *audience roles*: addressee, auditor, overhearer and eavesdropper, all of which are similar to *listener roles* used in studies on listening, as explained at the end of this section. According to Bell's design, the addressee is known, ratified and directly addressed by the speaker; the auditors are present in the interaction taking place and therefore known and ratified but are not directly addressed; the overhearer is known but not ratified and addressed; and the eavesdropper's presence is unknown. The concept of a ratified participant or listener was also used by Goffman (1976) and is relevant because it shows how speakers always direct their speech towards an audience, that is, the listeners.

Lønsmann (2011) argues that speakers choose language dependent on the *perceived language competence of the direct addressees* in an interaction as well as *their own subjective language*

competence and the content and the genre of an interaction. This means that English is used by the Danish colleagues when directly addressing the international colleagues if the international colleagues' competence in Danish is perceived to be too low to communicate in Danish. By contrast, the Danish colleagues prefer to speak Danish with each other, and as much as possible, because they subjectively find their own English to be insufficient or believe that their colleagues perceive their English to be insufficient. Meetings are therefore usually conducted in English for the benefit of the entire audience, but Danish colleagues also switch to Danish in the middle of a meeting conducted in English because they are addressing each other and not the entire crowd. This shows that the choice of language is dependent on the *direct addressees* and not the *auditors*, who may not understand, but the choice of language is also dependent on the *content* and *genre* of the interaction. It is, for example, common for small talk interactions in the middle of meetings or at the beginning or the end of meetings to be carried out in Danish even though non-Danish speakers are present because they are not directly addressed.

Lønsmann describes Danish as “default spoken language” (p. 130) at Lundbeck, and found that the Danish employees consider it arrogant and inappropriate to use English in front of other Danish colleagues if it is not strictly necessary. This attitude is related to a language norm of Danish being the natural choice when in Denmark, and Lønsmann explains this norm as strongest among the Danish employees with low English skills, who are also of the opinion that foreigners ought to learn Danish when in Denmark. By contrast, some international workers found it strange that so much Danish is used at Lundbeck when the corporate language is English, and all Danes seem to master English well. Language choices are therefore related to language norms at the workplace at both institutional and local levels, and these norms are important to understanding when Danish and English are used.

Jürna's (2014) study on international researchers' need for Danish while working at the University of Copenhagen also shows that English is considered the primary choice of language for conducting research, but that Danish “is necessary for administering science as well as for social interaction in everyday life” (p. 247). Jürna's results thus indicate similar language choices between English and Danish at a Danish workplace as Lønsmann, but Jürna additionally argues that the need for Danish is very much dependent on how long the international researcher/employee intends to stay in Denmark: the longer the intended stay,

the more useful Danish is considered. Jürna therefore adds an important aspect to the discussion of language choice between at workplaces in Denmark, namely the international employees' investment in learning and using Danish. As described above, speakers choose language depending on (the perceived competence of) the listener, but listeners also choose *listener roles* depending on their level of engagement in an interaction, and as mentioned, studies on listening refer to roles similar to Bell's (1984) audience roles.

Rost (2011) describes four *listener roles* from the most collaborative role as participant to the non-collaborative role as overhearer. The *participant* is spoken to directly and has equal speaking rights as other interlocutors, whereas the second most collaborative role as *addressee* has limited rights to respond and may, for example, be a student in a classroom. The third most collaborative role is the *auditor*, who is a member of an audience addressed directly, but who has limited rights to respond, and who is not expected to respond. An example would be passengers on a bus listening to the bus driver's announcement. The least collaborative role is in fact the non-collaborative role of *overhearer*, who is not directly addressed and has no rights to respond nor is expected to do so because he or she is listening in on other people's conversation. The different listener roles may therefore be seen as a continuum of one-way and two-way listening and differ slightly from the audience roles because of the focus on the listener and not the speaker.

These roles may change in interaction in the same way as content and genre change, and the roles are therefore dynamic and overlapping in the sense that a listener is also a speaker in many everyday interactions, and a listener may quickly go from being a participant to an overhearer, whether voluntarily or not. Audience roles are relevant to showing that how speakers speak depends on who they are speaking to. In the same way, listener roles show how listeners listen depending on who they are listening to, why they are listening, and when they are listening. As I will show later on, both audience roles and listener roles are necessary for describing language choices at the international workplaces, and how the learners are positioned in different audience roles as well as how they choose or do not choose different listener roles. In the following section, I turn to studies that focus on the receptive side of interactions, thus narrowing the scope even more towards L2 listening.

2.5 Ways of listening

How listeners listen depends on the purpose of listening. A common way of classifying listening is as *one-way listening* and *listening in interaction*, which, in many studies, are considered two very different ways of listening. As explained in Chapter 1, studies on L2 listening have primarily focused on one-way listening and listening as a cognitive skill taking place in the mind of the individual listener; only a few studies have focused on listening outside the classroom.

Psycholinguistic studies, such as Vandergrift and Goh's (2012), describe context as a factor that influences how the listening skill works in the mind of the individual listener. Listening in interaction and listening in informal or formal settings are therefore described as contextual factors. Formal and informal listening differs from the descriptions of formality in the sociolinguistic studies mentioned above in the sense that the psycholinguistic studies only refer to whether the listening takes place inside or outside the classroom. One-way listening and interactive listening can take place in both informal and formal settings but differ with regard to social possibilities for creating meaning as well as goals related to understanding. One-way listening and listening in interaction also overlap when it comes to the use of cognitive processes and knowledge sources for creating meaning.

Vandergrift and Goh (2012) describe one-way listening as non-participatory and transactional and argue that the goal of one-way listening is to interpret meaning. They refer to one-way listening as the most common form of listening in the language classroom, where the goal is to listen for specific information in a listening exercise. By contrast, interactive listening can be transactional, interactional and relational, and the aim of two-way listening may be to interpret and negotiate meaning, to respond and initiate interaction, and perhaps to establish social relationships. The different listening goals described by Vandergrift and Goh are similar to the goals of different workplace interactions, as explained above, and being a competent listener involves being able to listen in both one-way and two-way situations.

According to Vandergrift and Goh (2012), participating in interaction is more cognitively and socially demanding than one-way listening because the listener has to consider what to say while listening and act appropriately in relation to the interlocutor(s) and the situation. However, interactive listening may be less cognitively demanding than one-way listening because the listener can make use of *reception strategies* to indicate comprehension or lack of

comprehension, clarify meaning and ask for repetition (also Vandergrift, 1997). Interactive listening, according to Vandergrift and Goh, is also often highly contextualized and embedded in the specific context. Furthermore, “listeners in interactive situations often have a common communicative goal that facilitates interpretation” (p. 29) for example, a job interview or when buying something at a shop, which makes it easier to listen than in one-way listening situations. However, as previously described, interlocutors do not always share communicative goals, and even if they do, they may have different ways of reaching them as well as individual reasons for keeping their own face rather than that of their interlocutor.

Bremer et al.’s (1996) study on how mutual understanding between minority workers and majority speakers is reached; minority workers being L2 learners and majority being L1 users of the L2 the learners are using and learning. Bremer et al. show that even when interlocutors believe they have reached an understanding, they may in fact have reached different understandings. Furthermore, they may not notice this lack of shared understanding until later in an interaction, if they notice it at all. Bremer et al. therefore describe understanding as a continuum from sufficient understanding to total lack of understanding, and the difficulty of an interaction, utterance or word as relative depending on the interlocutors’ prior experiences and knowledge as well as the specific contextual situation. Bremer et al. argue that misunderstandings and problems related to understanding can often be ascribed to a combination of factors, ranging from specific linguistic problems, to problems at a discursive level. The minority workers may for example experience lexical and phonetic misunderstandings or mishearing because of lack linguistic knowledge of the L2, but misunderstandings may also take place because of a lack of shared background assumptions between the interlocutors. The L2 learners’ possibilities for achieving understanding are therefore dependent on the social possibilities, relations and agency as well as on the learners’ communicative competence.

Brouwer (2000) similarly argues that whether understanding in interaction is reached or not is not dependent on the participants but rather on the interaction itself. She questions whether listening and speaking can be separated in interaction and argues that interaction may be considered a skill in itself. She regards listening in interaction as the most basic and essential form of listening because learners learn through meaningful interaction with others. According to Brouwer, interaction offers systematic and orderly language use, which is

necessary for learning, and she uses assumptions and methods from Conversational Analysis (CA) to show that interaction is sequential and that people interact in organized ways by using different moves, such as taking turns in producing utterances. She argues that it is especially relevant when focusing on listening how interlocutors make use of a “display of understanding” (p. 68) to show their understanding of a previous turn in the following turn. Listening in interaction therefore always inevitably involves responding.

As both the psycholinguistic and socially informed studies show, listening in interaction is in many ways different from listening one-way because of the social possibilities and constraints the context facilitates. How learners listen and deal with comprehension problems in different listening situations depends on the goal of listening, but also on the relationship between the learners and their interlocutors and the learners’ as well as the interlocutors linguistic knowledge and background. However, even though meaning is negotiated in interaction, meaning is also created in the mind of the individual learner on the basis of the individual’s previous knowledge in combination with the specific context and co-text. Interactive listening is therefore in many ways similar to one-way listening. How learners create meaning cognitively is the focus of the following section.

2.6 L2 listening processes and knowledge sources

When learners listen, they make use of cognitive processes to perceive sound and construct meaning of the oral text by drawing on different kinds of knowledge, and as mentioned in Chapter 1.2, most contemporary studies have abandoned traditional views on the listener as a passive receiver and now see listening as an active skill which involves the listener engaging with the text to construct meaning (e.g., Flowerdew & Miller, 2005). According to Rost (2011), listening as opposed to hearing is an intentional action that involves the listener deciding to attend to the sounds that he or she perceives, and studies on L2 listening today stress that listening involves both decoding and interpretation.

Many studies on L2 listening make use of either Anderson’s (1985) or Levelt’s (1993) models of comprehension and describe the listening process as consisting of three interrelated phases of perception, parsing and utilization (e.g., Vandergrift and Goh 2012, Lynch 2009). In the perception and parsing phases, the listeners make use of *bottom-up* processing to segment a

sound stream into meaningful units and activate linguistic knowledge, such as phonemes, vocabulary and syntax. In the utilization phase, the listeners make use of *top-down* processing to activate what they know about the context, the topic, and the person they are listening to in order to find meaningful frameworks for interpreting the listening text. These frameworks, or *schemata*, as mentioned in Section 2.2.1, are the organization of prior learning in the long-term memory of the individual learner.

Bottom-up and top-down processes are related to the type of knowledge the listener uses when processing text while making use of the two receptive language skills, reading or listening. In a bottom-up process, smaller units of the language, such as phonemes or morphemes, are shaped into larger units, such as words and sentences, and in a top-down process, “larger units exercise an influence over the way in which smaller ones are perceived” (Field, 2004, p. 364). The processes are not to be seen as alternatives but as preferred directions depending on the listening situation and the goal of listening, for example, listening for specific information in an announcement at the train station (bottom-up), or trying to get the gist of a conversation at the lunch table at work (top-down).

Haastrup (1992) describes bottom-up and top-down processing as a continuum of interrelated processes based on the use of knowledge on different levels (see Figure 2.4 below). L2 listeners make use of all the resources available to them in order to make sense of what they are listening to, and this includes both declarative and procedural knowledge, that is, knowing *that* and knowing *how*, as also mentioned in Section 2.2.1. According to Haastrup (1992), these knowledge sources constantly interact and feed into each other, which means that processing takes place at multiple continuum levels simultaneously, and that levels can be skipped for efficient processing. The levels range from the smallest linguistic knowledge sources at the bottom of the continuum to conceptual knowledge of the world and texts at the top, and are similar to the previously described levels in communicative competence.

Haastrup (1992) explains that when listeners are trying to make sense of a listening text, they make use of the core process of comprehension, *inferencing*, which involves predicting and guessing the meaning of the listening text along the way by connecting already available linguistic cues, relevant background knowledge and the context (pp. 23-24). The context involves both the textual context and the physical (social) context and helps the listener limit the number of possible frameworks and schemata.

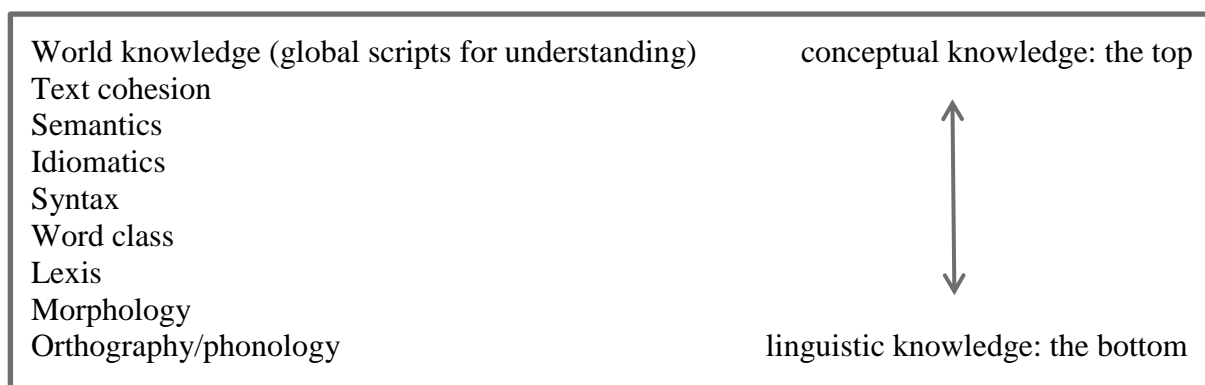


Figure 2.4. Haastrup's (1992) cues of understanding (my translation)

According to Haastrup, the top-down and bottom-up processes take place simultaneously because the listener starts to form interpretations of the oral text from the very moment sound is perceived and often even before. A listener may, for example, be able to guess what a speaker is saying because of a well-known context without actually understanding the specific words. This means that even the words and sounds the listener recognizes are dependent on the listener's prior knowledge. The listener may therefore perceive words or sounds differently than the speaker intended because of activation of individual knowledge or because of sound categorization based on previous linguistic knowledge.

According to Haastrup (1992), the appropriate way of processing oral text is to listen selectively, economically and top-down in order to avoid mental overload. Haastrup (2008) further argues that successful inferencing is "the ultimate goal for learner development" (p. 103), and this involves the ability to combine the different kinds of knowledge in the comprehension process and reach (the intended) meaningful comprehension of a text, similar to what fluent language users do. Haastrup's (2008) processing continuum shows an even clearer picture of the integration of the bottom-up and top-down processing continuum necessary for advanced and successful processing than her (1992) continuum shown above. Haastrup's (2008) continuum can be seen in Figure 2.5 below.

Section 1 of the continuum:**Top-ruled processing with integration of linguistic cues**

P2.8. Top-ruled interactive processing with full integration of linguistic cues

P2.7. Top-ruled interactive processing with integration of a central linguistic cue

P2.7. Top-ruled interactive processing with integration of non-central cue(s)

Section 2 of the continuum:**Top-ruled processing with activation of linguistic cues**

P2.5. Top-ruled processing with activation of linguistic cues. There is beginning or possible integration of linguistic cues.

P2.4. Top-ruled processing in the form of context-ruled processing with activation but no integration of linguistic cues.

Section 3 of the continuum:**Undecided with regard to ruling**

P2.3. Undecided with regard to ruling

Section 4 of the continuum:**Bottom-ruled processing**

P2.2. Bottom-ruled processing

P2.1. Pure bottom processing

Figure 2.5. Haastrup's (2008) processing continuum

The top levels of Hastrup's (2008) continuum are referred to as advanced processing, where linguistic cues are integrated with cues from the context (the context involving knowledge of both the co-text, i.e., the rest of the text, and background/world knowledge), whereas processing on the levels above the middle (in Section 2 of the continuum) only involves "activation" of linguistic cues and not integration. This means that the better the learner combines the actual linguistic cues with the context cues, the more likely the learner is to reach comprehension without spending too much time and mental energy. The top levels are therefore also the goal of language learning, and Hastrup (2008) argues that less experienced learners (of foreign languages) tend to make use of bottom-ruled processing, and that with training and educational experience, the learners move up the processing continuum and learn to combine bottom-up and top-down processing better.

The continuum therefore reflects an upward going movement in both the specific listening/reading comprehension situation as well as over time. For L1 listeners and fluent L2 listeners, the activation of knowledge sources and integration of the linguistic cues are in most cases automatized because the sounds, words and frameworks fit into the listeners' understanding of how communicative practices work, and their processes therefore usually take place without conscious awareness. Less proficient L2 listeners, on the other hand, are dependent on controlled processing, that is, conscious activation of necessary knowledge sources and therefore have trouble keeping up with the speed of an oral text because they constantly have to search for a way of making sense of what they are listening to.

How quickly new impulses are linked to existing knowledge depends on the working memory, where new auditory and visual sensory are first held and processed. This means that the more familiar the listeners are with what they are listening to, the quicker they can activate relevant knowledge and free up space in the working memory. The working memory has limited capacity and is only able to hold a few units at a time. Comprehension is therefore dependent on quick processing to keep up with the speed of the oral text. As Vandergrift and Goh (2012) explain:

How much information a listener can hold in working memory will depend on their level of language proficiency. As their level of language proficiency increases, listeners are able to retain and process increasingly larger chunks of meaningful speech. (p. 20)

Low-level learners very often mention speed as a key problem when listening (Lynch, 2009), and this has to do with overload on working memory because the learners lack both declarative and procedural processing knowledge, but it is also related to how spoken language is used. According to Buck (2001), speakers usually communicate in the most efficient way and do not make everything explicit but expect listeners to try to infer meaning. Furthermore, speakers rarely repeat exactly the same words when asked to repeat, and listeners therefore often only get one chance to process an oral text. However, spoken language is also extremely redundant, often linked to the immediate context and supplemented with non-verbal communication in the form of gestures and body language (Buck, 2001).

Describing spoken language and the features that influence L2 listening is beyond the scope of this study, but it is important to note that how well listeners compensate for their lack of linguistic knowledge and make use of the context as well as their previous knowledge can be significant for cognitive processing and successful comprehension. This leads back to the previous discussion from Section 2.3 on strategies for L2 learning and L2 use, and whether strategies are compensatory or not, part of the content of learning or an inherent part of all communication. This discussion is also present in studies on L2 listening and will be further addressed in the next section.

2.7 Strategies for listening

Vandergrift (2008) describes listening strategies as “deliberate procedures used by learners to enhance comprehension, learning and retention of the target language” (p. 84) and makes use of O’Malley & Chamot’s (1990) definition of learner strategies such as *metacognitive*, *cognitive* and *socio-affective strategies*, as previously described. Listening strategies are therefore, according to Vandergrift, strategies for the actual processing of information in the mind of the individual learner as well as strategies for forming and guiding the listener’s comprehension and learning. Vandergrift (2003, 2008) primarily focuses on cognitive and metacognitive strategies and makes use of a psycholinguistic approach to investigating listening as a skill in one-way listening situations. Social listening strategies, on the other hand, are used in communication with others and for example involve *asking for clarification*

or *showing comprehension*. These strategies therefore overlap with *reception strategies*, which Vandergrift (1997) argue are communication strategies, and therefore related to L2 language use. The categorization of which strategies are listening strategies and which are communication strategies therefore seem to overlap similar to strategies for learning and strategies for language use, as discussed in Chapter 2.2.2. Vandergrift's definitions above however seem to indicate that one-way listening primarily involves comprehension strategies, whereas listening in interaction involves both strategies for comprehension and strategies for showing reception.

Reception strategies involve strategies with *backward orientation* and *forward orientation* (e.g., Lynch, 1995; Vandergrift, 1997), and strategies for backward orientation involve *asking for repetition, clarification or confirmation* of some earlier difficulty in the interaction. Strategies with forward orientation involve *uptaking, backchanneling, forward inference and interpretive summary* to indicate comprehension to the interlocutor and to signal continuation of the interaction. They also involve *faking understanding* as a way of moving the interaction forward without seeking clarification or admitting non-understanding

Vandergrift (2003, 2008), among others, refers to inferencing as a *strategy*, and Haastруп (1992) refers to inferencing as a *process*, and these different ways of referring to inferencing is related to whether the process is used consciously and controlled or not. The strategies for listening comprehension listed by Vandergrift (2003, 2008) are therefore also processes and skills which fluent listeners use automatically when listening, but they may be applied consciously as strategies when listening problems occur. In addition, the processes and strategies used for listening are sometimes divided into *skills*. Rost (1990), for example, refers to “enabling skills” and “enacting skills” used when listening, and these skills are divided into skills for perception, interpretation and participation. Rost's division of skills is similar to Anderson's (1985) three processes for comprehension (perception, parsing and utilization), and thereby resemble skills used in the different processes. Vandergrift and Goh (2012) also describe both skills and strategies as goal-directed behaviors for comprehension or learning, but skills as automatic processes and strategies as conscious and controlled use of processes.

The difficulty of a listening task determines listeners' use of skills and strategies for comprehension, and, in most cases, L2 learners have to make use of more strategies than L1 users when listening to compensate for their limited L2 knowledge in order to reach

successful comprehension. Strategies involve declarative knowledge about when and how to use specific strategies as well as the (procedural) ability to use them, and studies such as Zhang and Goh's (2006) indicates that learners who have good strategic knowledge are more likely to use strategies as well. Having declarative knowledge about strategies may therefore lead to procedural use over time, in the same way as learning about grammar may lead to use over time. However, knowing about strategies does not necessarily mean using strategies, and using strategies does not necessarily mean knowing about strategies because the strategies may, for example, be used ineffectively because of routine. Nevertheless, the point of the studies on L2 listening strategies is that strategies in contrast to cognitive, affective and contextual factors that influence listening competence can be taught, and that strategies seem to play a crucial role in learning to listen.

As previously explained, many psycholinguistic studies focus on the strategies that successful learners use, and within studies on L2 listening, there also seems to be a clear correlation between being a successful learner and having good strategies. However, it is not entirely clear whether good strategies come with increasing linguistic proficiency, or whether good strategies lead to a higher proficiency level. One of the earliest studies on skilled listeners was O'Malley, Chamot and Küpper's (1989), which showed that effective listeners were more aware of dealing with attention problems and seemed to be using more top-down processing to relate the listening text to their own experience and background than the less effective listeners. The effective listeners also more frequently applied the two cognitive strategies, *inferencing* (using co-text) and *elaborating* (using context), and the metacognitive strategy of *self-monitoring*.

Vandergrift (2003) also investigated the strategy use of skilled and less skilled listeners and showed that both groups reported using cognitive strategies such as *inferencing*, *elaborating*, *imagery*, *summarization*, *translation*, *transfer*, *repetition* or *note taking*, but the skilled listeners reported using the strategy of *elaboration* more often than the less skilled listeners, and the less skilled listeners reported using the cognitive strategy *translation* more often than the skilled listeners. Vandergrift argues that translation is in many cases an insufficient strategy because the listener spends too much time on translating a specific word for example and thereby usually fails to link the potentially translated word(s) to the rest of the listening text and to the listeners' long-term memory. Elaboration like inferencing, on the other hand, is

one of the core processes of comprehension because it means relating the listening text to context, knowledge of the world and co-text. The skilled listeners also used more metacognitive strategies such as *advance organization, directed attention, selective attention and self-management, monitoring, and problem identification*, which according to Vandergrift are helpful for checking and questioning comprehension while listening as well as for monitoring use of cognitive strategies. Vandergrift therefore concludes that skilled listeners make use of a successful orchestration of strategies but not necessarily more strategies than less skilled listeners. In addition, it is clear from O'Malley, Chamot and Küpper (1989) as well as Vandergrift (2003) that skilled listeners use different strategies than less skilled listeners.

Studies on listening strategies generally show that high-level listeners use more strategies and are more motivated than low-level listeners, but as mentioned at the beginning of this section, it is not clear from these studies whether skilled listeners are the same as high-level listeners (Graham, Santos & Vanderplank, 2005). The studies on listening strategies, such as the two mentioned above, clearly show that low-level listeners lack linguistic knowledge. A way of compensating for this is to use strategies, but it is not clear whether low-level listeners can be good language learners/listeners because they are able to compensate successfully for their lack of linguistic knowledge in some situations or whether low-level learners cannot (yet) be considered successful.

As Field (2004) shows, compensating for lack of linguistic knowledge by the use of strategies does not always lead to (the intended) comprehension. He argues that less skilled listeners may in fact be compensating too much for their lack of linguistic knowledge by the use of top-down processing strategies. His study shows that low-level listeners make use of a lexical strategy and base their entire interpretation on the lexical items they recognize in the text and the schemata that these lexical items activate. In order to achieve a coherent understanding of a listening text, the learners try to make the rest of the text fit into these first activated schemata even when contradictory information occurs because they “lack confidence in their ability to process the sounds of the target language accurately” (p. 369).

Goh (2000), on the other hand, argues that less skilled listeners may experience more perception problems because of too much reliance on bottom-up processing and get stuck in trying to understand specific sounds and words when listening and therefore neglect to focus

on the overall meaning of the text. She investigates L2 listening problems reported in listener diaries by the learners themselves and as an analytical framework for comparing skilled and less skilled listeners makes use of Anderson's (1995) three phases of comprehension: perception, parsing and utilization, mentioned in 2.6. In her study, both skilled and less skilled listeners report a perception problem, that is, not being able to recognize known words, as in hearing familiar sounds but being unable to recall their meaning immediately, as well as a parsing problem of quickly forgetting what was heard. Only the skilled listeners report a utilization problem of understanding the words but not the intended meaning, and conversely, only the less skilled listeners report a perception problem of neglecting the next part of the listening text while thinking about the meaning. See Goh's table on listening comprehension problems in the three phases in Table 2.2 below.

Perception	Parsing	Utilisation
Do not recognise words they know	Quickly forget what is heard	Understand words but not the intended message
Neglect the next part when thinking about meaning	Unable to form a mental representation from words heard	Confused about the key ideas in the message
Cannot chunk streams of speech	Do not understand subsequent parts of input because of earlier problems	
Miss the beginning of texts		
Concentrate too hard or unable to concentrate		

Table 2.2 Goh's (2000) table on problems related to different phases of listening comprehension

Goh's study therefore, similar to listening strategy studies described above, shows that it is not clear whether low-level listeners lack only linguistic knowledge or perhaps also sufficient strategies for compensating. The studies on L2 listening strategies and listening problems, described in this section, all conclude that higher-level listener use more and better suited strategies than lower-level listeners. However, it is not clear whether a high level of linguistic proficiency can be reached without strategies, whether strategies and high level develop interchangeably when the learner gains automatic use of processes, or whether strategies can be used deliberately to accelerate the learning. In the same way as the studies on The Good

Language Learner described in Section 2.2.2 showed, high-level listeners/learners all report using more metacognitive strategies than low-level listeners/learners, and the use of these metacognitive strategies may be the reason why some listeners have reached a higher level than other listeners. Metacognition, self-regulation and learner autonomy seem to be key aspects of successful learning in psycholinguistic studies, and these concepts will therefore be further addressed in the next section.

2.8 Metacognition and learner beliefs

Metacognition involves reflection on thoughts and actions, and according to Wenden (1987), who first applied metacognition to language learning (inspired by Flavell 1979), successful learners are metacognitively aware “and self-directed and can take charge of their own learning processes” (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012, p. 84). According to Flavell (1979), metacognition involves having and using three kinds of knowledge: *person knowledge*, *task knowledge* and *strategy knowledge*. Person knowledge involves learners’ knowledge and beliefs about themselves as learners, and what successful learners do in order to succeed in their learning as well as what might lead to failure. Task knowledge involves knowledge about different learning situations and what they require, and strategy knowledge involves knowledge about how to act in order to achieve learning goals and therefore includes knowledge about cognitive and social strategies as well as metacognitive strategies (Goh, 1997). Metacognitive knowledge refers to what learners *know* and *believe* to be successful or unsuccessful ways of learning, but the concepts knowledge and beliefs are used very differently depending on the SLA approach as well as related concepts such as learner autonomy, self-regulation and reflection.

Vandergrift and Goh (2012) explain *beliefs* as a value-related subset of metacognitive knowledge, which may not be beneficial to the learning and may be difficult to change. Graham (2006), on the other hand, argues that the concepts of metacognition and beliefs are often used interchangeably. She investigates L2 learners’ perceptions of their success or lack of success in relation to listening comprehension and uses Paris and Winograd’s (1990) concept of “metacognitive beliefs” to argue that there is a strong correlation between beliefs and agency, instrumentality and control (Graham, 2006). Learners who believe they have the

ability to regulate their own learning by acting and using strategies feel more in control of their learning process. Successful listening is therefore, according to Graham (2006, 2011), dependent on the learners' *self-efficacy*, which is the learners' belief in their own ability to handle a task, in this case listening in different L2 situations. Graham argues that beliefs, strategies, control and motivation are strongly interconnected because learners who believe they are able to influence their own learning feel more in control and thus more motivated to keep trying to reach their learning goals. According to Graham (2006), control is exactly what L2 learners lack when it comes to listening because they have never been taught how to listen. She therefore argues that learners need to be made aware that they can actually influence their listening comprehension by making use of strategies, and this, in turn, can change their beliefs.

Other SLA studies have a socially informed approach to learner beliefs and define beliefs as "learners' construction of their experiences" (Hosenfeld, 2003, p. 39). These studies find that metacognitive approaches to language learning have too stable a concept of what the learners bring to the learning process (Barcelos & Kalaja, 2003). These socially informed approaches view learner beliefs as context-related and dynamic depending on the individual's reality and subjective truth and argue that beliefs are influenced by macro- and micro-political factors (e.g., Barcelos & Kalaja, 2003; De Costa, 2011). This definition of learner beliefs is very much in line with postmodern views on language learning and identity (Ritzau, 2014), as described in Section 2.2.3, and this once again shows the differences between the psycholinguistic approaches and socially informed approaches. The metacognitive view on beliefs and L2 learning seems to focus on providing a framework for teaching learners how to become more aware of their approach to learning by reflecting on their own learning and learning strategies, thereby gaining a sense of control over their learning. The socially informed approaches to learner beliefs focus on why beliefs change because of social contexts and individual learner histories. However, both perspectives seem to agree that learners' perceptions and attitudes towards learning influence their learning, which is also important for how and why learners listen.

In line with this, Illeris (2003) describes metacognition and reflection as central aspects in adult learning, and as previously mentioned, adults only learn something if they have an incentive to learn, and if they find the learning personally meaningful. Adult learning

therefore involves linking new learning to prior learning, emotions or understandings, and reflection on this learning process also leads to learning, which is more efficiently stored in the memory of the individual learner because the learner has spent time adding or changing it to existing learning or understanding. Reflection and metacognition are important aspects in learners' awareness of their actions (i.e. strategies) and preferences while learning, and this awareness may lead to a feeling of autonomy and control over the learning process.

Vandergrift (2005) investigates the relationship between motivation, metacognitive awareness and L2 listening proficiency and, similar to the above-mentioned studies on listening strategies, shows that more motivated learners seem to use more metacognitive strategies than amotivated learners, who do not report using any metacognitive strategies but rather have a tendency to stop listening when they encounter difficulty. However, Vandergrift does not find any significant correlation between highly motivated learners and higher proficiency level. This could be related to the fact that he makes use of Deci and Ryan's (2004) *self-determination theory*, who divide motivation into *intrinsic motivation*, *extrinsic motivation* and *amotivation*, which from a social perspective is an arbitrary division.

Intrinsic motivation, according to Deci and Ryan (2004), is the best kind of motivation because it the most self-determined kind of motivation, engaging the learner in the learning because of personal satisfaction and enjoyment. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is related to achieving some kind of instrumental goal, which is not considered a personal goal for the learner but rather pressure or influence from the social circumstances; it is very similar to Dörnyi's (2009) *ought-to self*, mentioned in Section 2.2.3. Amotivation, as touched upon above and as the term indicates, is lack of motivation.

The reason that Vandergrift's (2005) study shows a correlation between amotivated learners and low proficiency level but no significant difference between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and proficiency level, may be related to the fact that learners can perform equally well on the basis of external needs and motivations as on personal enjoyment. When learning a language it is not important where the motivation comes from but rather how significant the learner finds it to be. This is similar to learners' investment in language learning which cannot be separated from the social contexts in which they are learning, as discussed in 2.2.3. Including learners' beliefs, attitudes and perceptions of their language learning in less narrow categories than intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is valuable for understanding L2 learners'

actions in their language learning process. A combination of individual, social and cognitive aspects may influence learners' investment and incentive to learn and these aspects cannot be separated for the individual learner. This again shows the importance of a holistic view on L2 learning and listening.

2.9 Summary

In this chapter, I gave an overview of the theoretical concepts and studies I use to investigate L2 listening at work. I combined aspects from socially informed approaches to SLA with psycholinguistic approaches to describe L2 learning and listening as both social and cognitive, and to show how these different approaches add important aspects to a holistic understanding of L2 use and learning. L2 learning and listening takes place in and because of social contexts, but it also takes place in (and because of) the mind of the individual learner. Cognitive processes are therefore both relevant and necessary for explaining how L2 listening is used and learned in social contexts. I also discussed aspects from previous studies on language use at work, which are relevant to describing and investigating international employees' experiences with listening in Danish as an L2 in work-related contexts. In the next chapter, I turn to the methodology that I apply in the study to investigate L2 listening at work in a holistic way.

Chapter 3: Methodology - Investigating L2 listening

In this chapter, I outline my research design and methodological approaches to investigating L2 listening at work. I start out by explaining the general methodological principles of the study, which are related to the theoretical influences and general understandings explained and discussed in the previous chapter. I then describe the data generation process, including the pilot study and selection of participants as well as the individual qualitative techniques used to generate the data. I end the chapter by describing how I analyzed the data. Along the way, I discuss and reflect upon the methodological, practical and ethical choices made throughout the study.

3.1 General methodological principles: Conducting case study research

As described in Chapter 2, my point of departure for this study on L2 listening at work is that language and the social world mutually construct each other, and that language and learning are individual as well as social. Listening in an L2 therefore involves making use of cognitive processes as well as the social contexts to construct meaning and participate in social interaction. The research design for the current study is a consequence of these general principles as well as the fact that “listening is essentially a transient and invisible process that cannot be observed directly” (Rost, 2010, p. 2), which influences the possibilities for generating data.

As explained in Chapter 1, previous psycholinguistic studies on L2 listening have come to terms with the difficulty of investigating the invisible and transient process of listening by using experimental designs. They have for example used tests and think-a-louds to tap into online listening processes and isolate the listening skill as much as possible from interfering factors (e.g., Vandergrift, 2003; Graham, Santos & Vanderplank, 2007). The few socially oriented SLA studies on the receptive side of communication focus on how mutual understanding is achieved in everyday interactions between L2 learners and fluent users of the L2 (Bremer et al., 1996; Brouwer, 2000), and these studies therefore focus on the part of comprehension which can be observed in interactional turns. As a consequence, the psycholinguistic and socially oriented studies capture very different aspects of listening and

comprehension in an L2, all of which, in my point of view, are relevant to a holistic investigation of what listening comprehension involves (see Chapter 2 for a more thorough theoretical discussion of a holistic approach to L2 listening).

In this study, I focus on both one-way listening and listening in interaction and or doing this, I combine qualitative techniques from both the psycholinguistic and socially oriented studies mentioned above in a *multiple case study*. I explore the complexity of listening in Danish as an L2 by describing aspects of individual case participants' identities and experiences with listening and by discussing tendencies across the cases. The qualitative framework for the study was chosen because of the overall goal of describing, understanding and interpreting individuals' behaviors and experiences with listening in an L2 as a real-life phenomenon in the contexts in which it occurs (see e.g., Yin, 2009; Mason, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The framework therefore also served to address my research questions: *when* international employees listen at work, *what* problems they experience, *why* some situations are more difficult to listen in than other situations, and *how* international employees handle different listening situations at work.

In general, the point of a multiple case study is to show how a phenomenon influences different cases and how this phenomenon is experienced by different the cases. For doing this, the researcher has to provide contextualized trustworthy examples and illustrations as a way of "refining theory, suggesting complexities for further investigations as well as helping to establish the limits of generalizability" (Stake, 2005, p. 460). According to Stake (2005), case studies can be *intrinsic, instrumental or multiple*. While an intrinsic case is chosen because of interest in the particular case, an instrumental case is chosen as a means of investigating a particular phenomenon. Multiple case studies are therefore always instrumental since "they are chosen because it is believed that understanding them will lead to better understanding, and perhaps better theorizing, about a still larger collection of cases" (Stake, 2005, p. 445).

To create trustworthiness, case study researchers make use of *triangulation of participants, methods and theory* as well as *researcher reflexivity, member-checking, audit trails, thick descriptions, and peer assistance* in the analysis and writing of the report (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Case study research is therefore more a research tradition than an actual method as

conducting case studies means using different methods for investigating a case in a way that enhances understanding of that particular case (Casanave, 2010). In the present study, I make use of all these methodological techniques for creating dependability, credibility and trustworthiness.

I also make use of multiple data generation techniques as a way of investigating the phenomenon in question from different perspectives, but also to strengthen the consistency and trustworthiness of the study since all data generation techniques have their advantages and disadvantages. For example, using interviews as the only data source can be criticized for throwing light solely on participants' reconstructed experiences narrated in the interview situation (see e.g., Madsen, 2008). In addition, the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee, the setting and the atmosphere in itself play an important part in what is said in the interviews (Kvale, 1997). By contrast, using only observation data can be criticized for being only the researchers' view and interpretations of situations (Mason, 2002). By using interviews, think-a-louds, observations, self-recordings and member-checking as well as focus group interviews and diary studies, my data generation and analysis do not rely solely on either my own or the participants' interpretations but rather a combination (see also Madsen, 2008). The weaknesses of one method are therefore compensated for by the use of others (e.g., Nunan & Bailey, 2008).

It is my point of view that researchers can generate knowledge about language and how people use language by observing and asking them what they do and why they do it, but I also believe that research involves interpretation, and that knowledge generation itself is an interpretation process. Like Stake (2005), I regard knowledge as socially constructed and find that all research is influenced by the researchers conducting it. I therefore use the term "data generation" as a way of capturing how "the researcher, the social world, and the data interact in qualitative inquiry" (Garnham, 2008, p. 3) and to show that the researcher plays an active role in constructing knowledge as well as data. By acknowledging this, I also recognize the need for a methodology that can represent the participants being researched and clarify their perspectives in a transparent and trustworthy way. My study is therefore primarily interpretive but also contains more descriptive features in that I seek to describe the individual case

participants' backgrounds and everyday language use in the way they themselves explain it. I therefore use their words from interviews and think-a-louds as primary data.

However, because of the transient and invisible character of listening taking place in the mind of the individual person, it has been necessary to direct the participants' attention towards thinking about listening and provide them with a vocabulary to talk about listening through the think-a-louds and exemplification in the interviews. I have also made use of observations and recordings to expand and interpret the participants' understandings and explanations as well as member-checking as a way of validating and expanding my interpretations and gaining as trustworthy descriptions as possible. I find it difficult to separate what people say and do from the social contexts they are in since people may have beliefs or ideas that influence their behavior in a way they are not aware of. This makes the combination of the participants' descriptions and the researcher's interpretations an interesting and fruitful way of gaining insight into L2 listening as a cognitive and social phenomenon. In this way, I place myself closest to the methodological belief that *validity* can never fully be achieved, but I still attempt to make sense of what both my participants and I experience in social contexts in a trustworthy and dependable way. With this point of view, I show that I regard some descriptions and interpretations as more trustworthy than others, and that confirmability and dependability can be achieved to some extent (e.g., Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Cresswell & Miller, 2000). In the following sections, I give an overview of the data generation phases and the selection of participants as part of the audit trail for the study and as a way of establishing researcher reflexivity.

3.2. Data generation

In accordance with Duff (2012), the design of the present multiple case study was never fixed but has changed and developed as it unfolded. The study has therefore in many ways been carried out explorative and inductively as a way of narrowing the scope and refining the research design. The data for the study has been generated in three phases. A pilot study, as the first phase, served the purpose of gaining access to the field of study, finding and selecting participants, and forming the research design for the second phase. The second phase constituted the main data generation of the study, consisting of four case studies, including

interviews, think-a-louds, observations and self-recordings, as well as five more individual interviews, a focus group interview, and two diary studies. The third phase involved selecting relevant data for writing up the case study portraits and presenting the portraits to the participants in member-checking sessions. Figure 3.1 below shows the three phases.

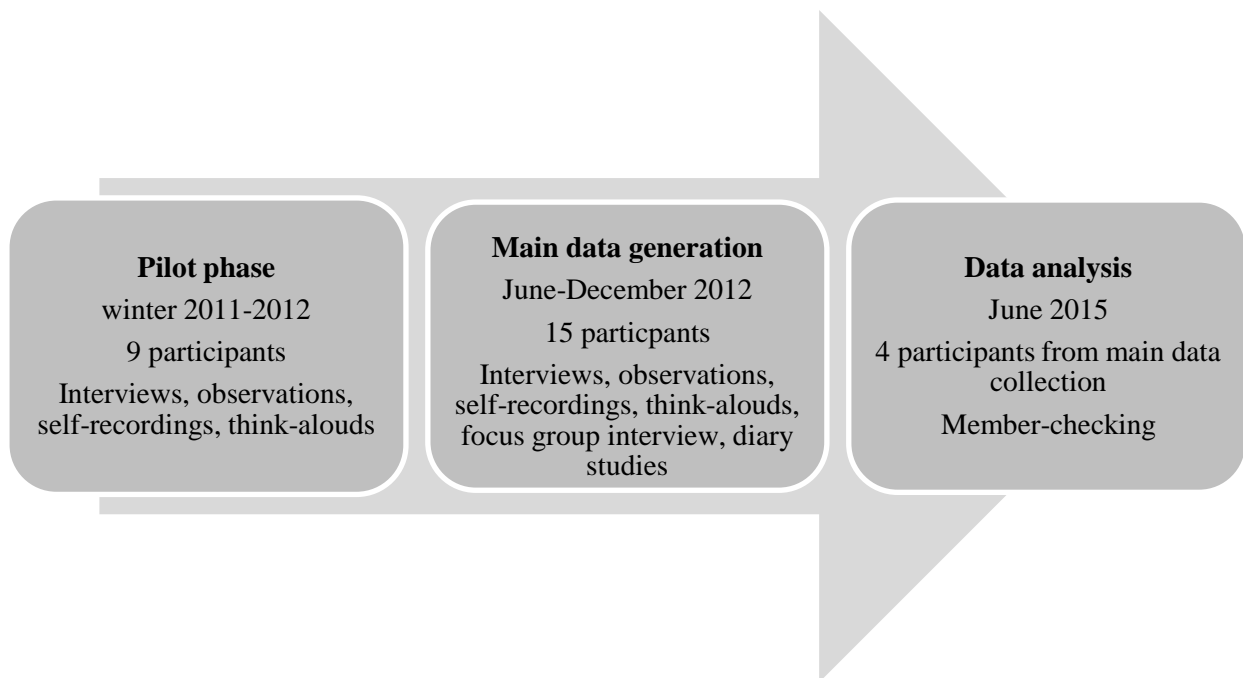


Figure 3.1. Overview of data generation and data analysis

In the following section, I describe the pilot study and the implications this phase had on the main data generation and the selection of participants. I then go on to describe the different qualitative techniques used to generate the data. Table 3.1 below gives an overview of the entire data generated and used in the final analyses.

Data	Participants	Place of fieldwork	Methods
Case studies	4 international employees from IBM Denmark	Three different locations at IBM Denmark	Pre-liminary interviews, think-a-louds, observations, self-recordings, post interviews and member-checking
Interviews	14 international employees at IBM Denmark (8 were part of the pilot)	Different IBM locations	Semi-structured interviews (some including recordings and think-a-louds from the pilot phase)
Focus group interview	4 participants from different international workplaces	Hellerup Sprogcenter	Semi-structured focus group interview
Diary studies	2 international employees from Mærsk and SimCorp	E-mails, 1 interview at a café and 1 at the participant's workplace	Written reflections on e-mails and semi-structured interviews

Table 3.1. Overview of data

3.2.1. Pilot study: experiences and implications

The pilot study in the present study was part of the exploratory design and allowed me to become familiar with collecting data at an international workplace, test my research tools, and my technical recording equipment. It also allowed me to narrow the scope of the study, revise the research design and research questions as well as sharpen my participant selection criteria. The pilot study at IBM Denmark took place in the winter 2011-2012 and involved eight international employees participating in interviews, observations, self-recordings and think-a-louds to varying degrees.

I gained access to IBM Denmark through a close family member (Anne Brix Christiansen) who works at IBM. She also helped me recruit the participants for the preliminary pilot phase (See Appendix A: Email sent for pilot study). Gaining access to IBM Denmark involved obtaining an approval from the CEO to start the fieldwork and meeting with the legal department, where I signed a confidentiality contract allowing IBM to go through the data and

change IBM sensitive material if necessary. I was reluctant to sign the contract at first, but it turned out to be a helpful tool for making arrangements with employees and their managers about participating in the study because the overall legal matters had already been dealt with. Furthermore, no sensitive private or work-related data was used, as will be further described in 3.3.2. (The contract (in Danish) can be seen upon request.)

At the time of the data generation, I wanted to investigate how much the participants were able to explicate about listening in an L2. For that reason, I did not tell the participants that I was interested in listening comprehension because I wanted to see how much they would talk about listening themselves in the interviews. Goh (1997) claims that all learners have at least some knowledge about their L2 listening, but because my participants were not taking language classes at the time of the data generation like the participants in Goh's study, I was uncertain about how much they would be able to talk about their language learning and language learning skills.

I also wanted to do unfocused and general observations (Adler & Adler, 1994) of the everyday language practices at an international workplace as a way of getting an overview of relevant cases and problems to investigate in relation to my research. However, general observations at IBM turned out to be difficult because some lines of business within IBM, such as Global Business Services and Global Technology Services, where I started out, are based on a matrix organization, which means that the employees work on specific projects for a period of time and not with the team they are based in. The employees working on the same project therefore also usually have different managers (line managers), who are most often not their daily project managers. Furthermore, people working on projects usually work on client sites or in an area dedicated to the project, but they do not necessarily have the same desk from day to day, as opposed to back office employees in, for example, Transformations and Operations, who most often have their own desk in a shared office (Private emails with Anne Brix Christiansen). This work structure meant that I could not just observe a department and then select cases but had to find cases to follow immediately and then observe their individual workdays.

All eight participants recruited through my contact person were interviewed, and six of them agreed to wear a microphone for 2-5 days. Three of these six also agreed to me observing them one of these days (see Table 3.2 in the next paragraph for an overview of all participants in the study). Of the two who only participated in interviews, one felt uncomfortable recording himself, and the other had the recorder for a few days but made no recordings because he found that Danish was rarely spoken around him. Of the ones who did record themselves, one participant was used as a very preliminary case for testing the technical equipment and left Denmark right after the self-recordings. Another was from Sweden and experienced no comprehension problems with Danish, so he was not a relevant participant. The third participant who recorded himself had literally just arrived in Denmark and therefore knew no Danish, nor did he have any interest in learning Danish because he was on a limited contract.

The remaining three participants described themselves as more or less fluent in Danish and reported that they did not experience any problems with spoken communication in Danish. Two of these three even used Danish in all oral situations at work with Danish colleagues, while the third felt more comfortable with English, which was his first language. These three all had permanent contracts and Danish families, and I therefore started noticing a pattern involving two different kinds of international employees at IBM Denmark. The first group had limited contracts and no interest nor investment in learning Danish, and the other group had long-term or permanent contracts, a higher interest and investment in Danish and usually family in Denmark. Because of my L2 learning focus, the latter group seemed more relevant to my study. This is a tendency that also Jürna (2014), mentioned in Chapter 2.4, addresses in her investigation of international researchers' need for Danish at the University of Copenhagen, which will be further discussed in Chapter 6.

Furthermore, only a few of the participants participating in the pilot study talked extensively about listening in Danish, which seemed to reflect their proficiency levels in Danish. Three knew very little Danish, and four were more or less fluent. It was therefore important to the subsequent data generation to find participants at levels in between in order ensure that they were able to actually explicate their thoughts about listening. In accordance with previous literature I had anticipated that participants with very high levels were less useful candidates

for the study because they are able to process Danish automatically (e.g., Ericsson & Simon, 1993). I therefore decided to try a think-a-loud exercise on two of the high-level pilot participants to confirm this anticipation. Both participants understood audio excerpts perfectly and therefore just repeated the content, indicating automatic language processing in accordance with Ericsson & Simon (1993). Automatic and controlled processing was described in Chapter 2.2.1, and the use of think-a-loud exercises, in general, as well as in the present study will be further addressed in Section 3.2.3.3. In the following section, I turn to the recruitment and selection of participants for the main data generation.

3.2.2. Selecting and finding participants for main data generation

Kruuse (2007) describes strategies for selecting cases that are either typical or unique; cases that give various degrees of information; cases chosen on the basis of references; theoretically chosen cases; or randomly chosen cases depending on the purpose of the case study. All selections require a consideration of the kind of information the cases may provide, but the researcher can only plan so much in advance, and sometimes cases are chosen mostly on the basis of practical criteria or drawn from a larger set of cases during the analysis (Duff, 2012).

According to Kruuse's (2007) categorization, the participants selected for the present study can be referred to as *relevant random cases*. Relevant in the sense that they were able to provide new and useful knowledge about L2 listening, but randomly and pragmatically chosen depending on who I was able to get in touch with, and who was willing to participate all the way through. The selection of participants therefore took place during the entire data generation and analysis as a way of triangulating and confirming already gained understandings and creating the most interesting and trustworthy picture of L2 listening experiences, bearing Stake's (2005) words in mind:

My choice would be to choose that case from which we feel we can learn the most. That may mean taking the one most accessible or the one we can spend the most time with... sometimes it is better to learn a lot from an atypical case than a little from a seemingly typical case. (p. 451)

The cases were therefore not chosen as representative of all international employees in Denmark or at IBM but on the basis of the amount of data they could generate, and as a way of gaining insight into individual perspectives on listening.

In the preliminary pilot phase, I chose the participants I had quick and immediate access to as a way of exploring the field and developing the research design more thoroughly. However, when recruiting participants for the main data generation, I gave a presentation at IBM Denmark titled: “PhD project on international workers in Denmark and their language learning” (See Appendix B for slides from the presentation) in which I encouraged international employees to sign up for the study. For the presentation, I set up following five criteria for which candidates I was looking for:

- People who are participating in Danish classes now
- People who are at a beginning or intermediate level of Danish
- People who experience some kind of problems in relation to speaking or understanding Danish
- People who are not fluent in Danish
- People who understand and/or use a little Danish but have never attended classes

The wording of the criteria was supposed to be understandable to all and present different perspectives the international workers could align to and were set up as different categories the international employees would recognize. I wanted the participants themselves to decide what level they were at and whether they felt fluent or not. Some of these criteria therefore overlap and were not supposed to be applied all at once. I also wanted to make it clear that it did not matter whether they were actively participating in Danish classes or not.

Even though the presentation specified that the study was on L2 listening, the criteria as well as the title of the presentation were very general and caused a bit of confusion since I was subsequently contacted by a number of international employees with very different language levels. Only a few of the employees who contacted me seemed to be aware that the study was about listening in Danish, but they all had different stories and experiences about moving to Denmark and learning Danish that they were more than willing to share. The emails I received revealed that 10 international employees were relevant to the study, and eight of them turned out to meet the criteria from the presentation for participant selection after having participated in an interview. Five of these eight had the time and energy to do recordings, and four of these five stayed in contact throughout the entire data generation and were therefore the ones used for the case study portraits.

Through Anne Bornfeldt who was the head of the HR department at IBM Denmark in 2012 , I also got in contact with The Consortium for Global Talent, which offers Danish courses for international employees at the 19 biggest companies in Denmark, including IBM Denmark, in collaboration with the language center Clavis,. Through these courses, I recruited two international employees who worked at Mærsk and SimCorp respectively. Furthermore, through a colleague (Claes Mørkeberg) who was working at Hellerup Sprogcenter in 2012, I recruited the participants for the focus group interview. An overview of the participants can be seen in Table 3.2 below. In the following sections, I describe the main data generation and the individual qualitative techniques used for generating data.

Pseudonym	Country of origin	Workplace	Years in DK (ca.)	Data
Case 1: Maria	Italy	IBM	9	Interview, observations and self-recordings, think-a-loud, member-checking
Case 2: Pilar	Spain	IBM	6	Interview, observations and self-recordings, think-a-loud, member-checking
Case 3: Robert	South Africa	IBM	4	Interview, observations and self-recordings, think-a-loud, post interview, member-checking
Case 4: Tomasz	Poland	IBM	6	Interview, observations and self-recordings, think-a-loud, post interview, member-checking
Jaya	India	IBM	2	Interview, self-recordings, post interview
John*	USA	IBM	9	Interview, observations and self-recordings, think-a-loud
Minna*	Finland	IBM	14	Interview, observations and self-recordings, think-a-loud
Aleksander*	Estonia	IBM	0	Interview, observation and self-recordings
Catherine*	England	IBM	12	Interview, observation and self-recordings
Mats*	Sweden	IBM	3	Interview, self-recordings
Elsa*	USA	IBM	1	Interview, self-recordings
Anish*	India	IBM	1	Interview
Andreas*	Germany	IBM	5	Interview
Francois	France	IBM	13	Interview
Jasper	Holland	IBM	10	Interview
Allan	Moldova	IBM	4	Interview
James	USA	IBM	7	Interview
Michael	USA	IBM	9	Interview
Petra	Brazil	Mærsk	2	Focus group interview
Paulo	Brazil	Private company	1	Focus group interview
Juan	Spain	University of Copenhagen	2	Focus group interview
Alek	Uzbekistan	Private company	1	Focus group interview
Derek	Australia	Mærsk	2	Diary study, interview
Boris	Poland	SimCorp	5	Diary study, interview

Table 3.2. Participant overview.

All participants are between 25 and 50 years of age. Pilot study participants are marked with *

3.2.3.1 Interviews

Interviewing is a common and important tool in qualitative research. It can be used in different ways depending on the purpose and the overall principles of the study (e.g., Mason, 2002). In general, the qualitative interview focuses on the interviewees' own understanding of themselves and their experiences, and the one-on-one format allows the researcher to ask questions, listen and gain access to personal accounts and articulations. However, the interviewer also takes part in the construction of meaning during the interview (Kvale, 1997), and this makes the researcher a central part of the interaction, which has to be taken into consideration during the interview as well as in the following analysis. The interviewer holds the primary right to interpret and analyze the interaction afterwards and the interview setting therefore requires reflection on the asymmetric relationship between the interviewer and interviewee (Kvale, 2006).

Interviewing played an important role in the data generation of the present study as a meaningful and easily accessible way of exploring L2 learners' experiences, views and understandings of listening in Danish as an L2 in an in-depth manner sensitive to complexities and nuances of their individual stories. The interviews were also essential for the selection of case study participants. The interviews were used to exploring the research questions from the perspectives of the participants and therefore focused on when the participants listened in Danish at work, what problems they experienced and how they handled these situations.

I conducted the interviews using a thorough interview guide with questions listed in three categories according to Wenden's (1987) description of metacognitive knowledge, as described in Chapter 2.8. The categories were *person knowledge*, *task knowledge* and *strategy knowledge*, and these categories were used as a way of listing all of the possible questions I could think of for investigating L2 listening (See Appendix C: Interview guide). The categories were influenced by a literature review of the studies on L2 listening at the time but also simply worked as tool for structuring the aspects of listening I wanted to investigate. *Person knowledge* therefore covered a broad range of questions in relation to the participants' backgrounds, beliefs and language learning preferences; *situation knowledge* was an adapted version of Wenden's task knowledge and included questions on L2 use in different contexts; and *strategy knowledge* involved questions about actions for handling different learning and

listening situations in Danish, inspired by strategies listed in previous studies on L2 listening, e.g., Vandergrift (2003, 2008).

The intention was to investigate whether categories of strategies, beliefs and tasks referred to in studies on L2 listening inside language classrooms and in experimental settings were useful categories outside the language classroom as well. Furthermore, the interview guide helped me gain an overall understanding of how the individual learners' backgrounds and previous (language learning) experiences played a role in their language use and actions in different contexts. As a way of talking about different situations at work, I often referred to different locations, such as lunch and meetings, as typical situations of 'social' and work-related character. As described in Chapter 2.3, the distinction of 'social' versus work-related is an arbitrary one, in the sense that all situations at work are social as they involve interaction. However, the distinction between lunch and meetings seemed to work as commonsense intuitive categories for the participants when talking about different situations and interactions at work.

In spite of the thorough interview guide, I conducted the interviews semi-structurally using the questions in a random order, thus creating an interview format more similar to a conversation with the narrative of the participant in focus (Kvale, 1997). I recorded all the interviews and only took a few notes along the way for follow-up questions or comments. On the basis of the experiences gained conducting interviews during the pilot phase, I supplemented the interview guide with a list of five templates from learners related to listening in Danish as an L2 because the participants talked very little about their listening comprehension without a prompt. The templates were statements taken from an interview with two international colleagues at the University of Copenhagen with the purpose of creating templates, and from the data of two studies (Arnfast, 2007; Jürna, 2014) on Danish as an L2 conducted by colleagues at the University of Copenhagen.

I used the templates in every interview in the main data generation to make the participants reflect on their listening comprehension. I read the quotes out loud one at a time and told the participants to comment on them. The statements illustrate different problems or reflections in relation to listening in Danish with reference to conversation partners, Danish classes,

emotions when speaking and listening to Danish, motivation, specific difficulties with learning and using Danish, and situations where Danish is more or less useful, as can be seen below:

1. I like speaking to foreigners in Danish. They speak much slower than the Danes, so they are much easier to follow, and in this way we are both speaking in our second language so none of us feel stupid when we don't know a word or don't understand.
2. You need to listen to something interesting if you are to make anything out of it. The listening exercises we have in class are simply not interesting and it makes no sense to listen to them without video and visual clues, which makes it much easier for us to understand.
3. When people speak to me in Danish, I often just go: "mm" because I never understand what they are saying and I don't like asking them to repeat. I probably don't try that much to understand what people are saying to me in Danish, because I find the language really difficult to understand and I don't have enough motivation to keep trying.
4. Because the spelling and pronunciation is so different in Danish, the written words are no help to me. I find reading pretty easy, but when I hear the words spoken out loud I simply don't recognize them.
5. I think in most situations I could just live with just understanding Danish but not really speaking or writing it. Especially when I am with other Danish people and they speak to each other, or on the public transportation. Without understanding Danish, I always feel like a foreigner here and I never feel at home. You need to be able to at least understand to live a normal life in Denmark.

Using the templates turned out to be a useful approach as it made all of the participants reflect on many aspects of the quotes and share experiences which had not come up in the interviews before. Each interview took around 45-60 minutes, and most participants seemed happy to share their story about living in Denmark and their experiences with Danish, so it was easy to keep the conversations going. I was also conscious of the above-mentioned asymmetric relationship between the interviewer and interviewee (Kvale, 2006). As a way of minimizing this asymmetry, I tried to give the participants time and space to reply to my questions in a relaxed atmosphere by explaining the overall goal of the interview as an informal talk about their experiences of moving to Denmark and learning (or not learning) Danish. When it felt natural, I shared some of my own L2 learning experiences but also offered my professional knowledge on learning Danish as an L2 when relevant by, for example, recommending books

or webpages for further learning. In this way, the participants were also offered something in return for participating. As a third way of minimizing the asymmetric relationship and creating trustworthiness and credibility, the participants were asked to comment on my analysis of the data generated with them in the member-checking sessions. The member-checking sessions will be further discussed in Section 3.3.2. In the following section, I describe how I made use of observations and self-recordings in the data generation process.

3.2.3.2 Observations and self-recordings

In contrast to interviews, observations do not rely on participants' verbalizations or reconstructions of specific contexts but on the researcher's first-hand experiences of a given research setting (Mason, 2002, p. 84). As previously explained, the use of observations and interviews fruitfully supplement each other when investigating participant reflections and understandings in relation to the social contexts they describe and are part of. In this study, observations served to supplement the interview data by addressing whether the participants' beliefs and reflections on language use in different situations at work were in line with what, from my point of view, happened in specific situations at work. The purpose of the observations was not to look for inconsistencies between the participants' reflections and my observations, however, but they played an important part in gaining an in-depth understanding of the participants' everyday lives and language use at work. The observations and the interviews were therefore used as a way of investigating the research questions of when the international employees listen at work, and how they handle the different listening situations from another angle. The use of observations therefore also supported my overall methodological principles that social phenomena are complex and need to be investigated from multiple dimensions.

The overall principles of observing and recording in a workplace environment were inspired by Stubbe (2001), Holmes and Stubbe (2003) and Lønsmann (2011), who believe that data generation at workplaces should be as unobtrusive as possible, not take up too much time and not interfere with the core business of the environment. The technical equipment therefore has to be easy to work with for the participants as well as for the researchers, and the quality of recordings must be good enough for the researchers to analyze the data without being present at the time of the recordings. Stubbe (2001) refers to a 'hands-off' approach for generating

data, which involves giving the participants as much direct control of the data generation as possible without the researcher being present. This minimizes the effect on having outsiders at the workplace interfere with the participants' everyday work life. It also allows the participants to record as naturally occurring interactions as possible while wearing a microphone within a limited period of time. The participants therefore need to be instructed in what to record to ensure that sufficient samples of their everyday work-life interactions are generated.

When observing, my observation role shifted from complete to passive participation (Duranti, 1997), which meant interacting with the participants and their colleagues when necessary, but being a silent observer when possible. Since the participants were already wearing recorders on the days of observation, I limited note-taking to a minimum in situations that required my participation and then tried to write down as much as possible when given the opportunity, for example, when the participants were working quietly at their desks. The experiences gained during the pilot phase combined with the above-mentioned principles had convinced me not to observe the participants for the entire recording period since my presence seemed to interfere too much with the participants' usual everyday practices. The participants spent most of their time talking to me when I was there, and I spent a lot of time answering questions from their colleagues, who wanted to know more about the study and who I was. I therefore only observed the two case study participants (Robert and Maria) who worked at locations I was not familiar with for the main data generation. The other two case participants (Pilar and Tomasz) therefore did all of their recordings on their own because I knew the location where they worked quite well from the pilot study, which made it easy for me to follow their recordings.

The self-recordings took place immediately after the observations, if there were any observations, or at a time arranged with the individual participant. I instructed the participants in how to use the recorders with attached microphones and in how to upload their recordings to Dropbox if the recorder filled up. I followed the guidelines for workplace research described above, and this way of generating data minimized my physical presence, and gave the participants the control to decide what to record. I told them I was interested in when Danish was spoken to or around them but also in language choices and switches between

Danish and English. I further explained that they could turn off the recorder if they wanted to, and that some of their colleagues probably felt more comfortable being recorded than others, but that the confidentiality contract made sure that no problematic recordings would be used. All participants recorded for around 3-5 days by themselves before we met up again and talked about the recordings in a post interview, during which I referred to specific instances in the recordings, which I had transcribed roughly.

As Lønsmann (2011) and Schoning and Moller (2009) point out, participants wearing recorders are aware that the researcher is the final audience of their interactions, especially at the beginning of interactions. This means that participants often discuss the fact that they are being recorded in the recordings and address the researcher directly, which was also the case in my study. Most of the participants in the present study recorded interactions in which they address their participation in a research project and the fact that they are wearing a microphone. One participant even addresses me directly in a recording, which also Lønsmann experienced in her study, and Lønsmann, similar to Schoning and Moller, argues that instead of seeing this as a problem of researcher intrusion in everyday interactions, the recorder needs to be taken into consideration in the same way as when researchers are present while observing. The presence of the recorder and my guidelines for the participants' recording therefore naturally influenced what kinds of interactions the participants recorded. In some cases, it even seemed to influence how much Danish the case participants used, but the self-recordings were nevertheless an important tool for gaining insight into everyday interactions and language choices in the various work situations the participants listened in, such as meetings, lunch and coffee breaks, office work, administrative work, and hallway interactions. In the next section, I discuss how think-a-loud techniques added important information to the study.

3.2.3.3 Think-a-louds

Think-a-louds are elicitation techniques or verbal reports often associated with applied linguistics and psycholinguistics. They are used to explore learners' thinking processes (and strategies) while doing an activity or a task (Gass & Mackey, 2000). Studies on L2 listening which use think-a-louds or stimulated recalls usually seek to gain insight into the strategies learners use for making sense of a given oral text in a test-like situation. The purpose with

these studies is usually to describe general human cognitive processes (e.g., Graham, Santos & Vanderplank, 2007; Vandergrift, 2003) rather than for the researchers to gain insight into the individual participant's experiences, beliefs and choices when learning and listening in an L2. The assumption underlying verbal reports, including think-a-louds, self-reports and self-observations, is that individuals' thought processes are or can be made "available to conscious self-examination and self-analysis" (Wallace, 2007, p. 76) by letting participants perform difficult tasks requiring cognitive problem-solving strategies. In this way, things not usually available to observation can be investigated by asking the participants to verbalize their actions and strategies for performing the task.

The purpose of the think-a-loud exercise in the present study was to make the participants talk about listening while actually listening in Danish instead of only relying on meta-reflections from their memory in the interviews. The think-a-louds were therefore used as a way of activating the participants' beliefs and knowledge about their listening comprehension in Danish related to the specific situation as well as relate what they did in the exercise with what they experienced doing in other listening situations. Furthermore, the exercise served as an awareness-raising exercise, making the participants aware of what I wanted them to think about while recording. I found the think-a-loud technique necessary because of the tacit and unconscious nature of listening, as described in 3.1, and also because I needed some kind of tool for comparing the participants' listening comprehension.

The exercise involved the participants listening to a radio extract and thinking out loud about what they did while trying to understand. I paused the radio extract at various intervals and asked the participants what they were thinking. I used extracts from Mads & Monopolet each time, a debate program on a Danish public service radio channel involving Danish celebrities discussing personal dilemmas sent in by the listeners. The point of the exercise was for the participants to start reflecting on their listening but with no intention of them necessarily being able to explain that much about what they were doing in the specific situation. Many of them started out by referring to the bits they had understood, and I had to ask them more directly what they did and not what they heard, making them comment on their strategies and thoughts on how they tried to make sense of the extracts.

The exercises thus gave a valuable insight into other aspects of listening than those produced by the interviews, observations and self-recordings, and gave a very different kind of data since the participants were able to comment on their online listening while doing the task and link it to other contexts. For example, the participants verbalized use of previous knowledge and schemata as well as metacognitive reflections and strategies on how they tried to solve the task, and how that was similar or different to listening in situations at work. Ideally the extracts used should have been recordings from work-related situations supplemented with stimulated recalls of their own recordings, but because of time limitations and to make sure the task was sufficiently difficult, I decided to use radio extracts. Furthermore, using the same extracts for all the participants would perhaps have made it easier to compare the participants' level and use of strategies in the same situation than what I was able to do in the cross-case analysis in Chapter 5. Nevertheless, it turned out that the technique did indeed serve the purpose of activating the learners' thoughts on listening or guiding them towards thinking about experiences with listening.

However, it is generally difficult to determine what the participants are actually reporting when conducting think-a-louds and other elicitation exercises because it is all taking place in the minds of the individual participants, and the thinking needs to be slowed down unnaturally to conduct the verbal reports (Ericsson & Simon, 1993). Despite these weaknesses, elicitation techniques are assumed to be the closest possible way of tapping into the cognitive processes of learners, and the participants in my study definitely described different thoughts on listening than in the rest of the data. According to Ericsson and Simon (1993), texts used for verbal reports need to be difficult for the participants to comprehend in order to resemble a problem-solving activity. In this way, the participants are able to verbalize information about how they are handling the task and not just what the text is about. Texts that are easy for the participants are therefore not suitable for verbalization because comprehension then proceeds rapidly and automatically, and what the participants elicit is similar to a reproduction of the text itself.

The pilot and the literature suggested that that participants with very high L2 levels of Danish would be of little relevance for the study because a very high language level implies automatized language use, which is difficult to tap into because it no longer requires

conscious strategies, unless the L2 users experience specific comprehension problems in the same way as L1 users do. By contrast, lower-level learners use more controlled strategies when trying to listen and comprehend, which makes it easier for them to explicate their online processing. The participants in the four case studies provided fruitful comments in the think-a-louds because they all experienced comprehension problems to some extent, which was also an important reason for choosing the participants who had conducted think-a-louds as the primary case study participants. In the next sections, I describe how the focus group interview and the diary studies were used to generate more data than the data for the case studies.

3.2.3.4 Focus group interviews

In line with other qualitative methods, focus group interviews seek to investigate people's opinions, beliefs and behavior in relation to a selected topic. The group setting of a focus group interview potentially allows for a wider perspective on the topic than individual interviews (Vaughn, Schumm & Sinagub, 2015). Group dynamics offer the advantages that the participants can comment on each other's statements, generate a shared enthusiasm about a topic, and provide confidence as well as spontaneity in the interaction. The reason for this is that the individual participant is not questioned alone and, to a certain extent, has a choice about when to reply and comment (e.g., Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007).

The participants in the focus group interview were, as described in 3.2.2, recruited through a colleague working at Hellerup Sprogcenter. This colleague asked his fellow teachers to pass on a handout I had written about the study and the focus group interview to their students (see Appendix D). Four international employees from different workplaces signed up and participated in the focus group interview, which was conducted at Hellerup Sprogcenter in the afternoon before the participants had classes and took approximately 2 hours. The participants were from different classes and different levels and did therefore not know each other in advance. As Halkier (2008) argues, it may be an advantage that the participants do not know each other for facilitating free discussion in a focus group interview. However, it may also make the participants feel more insecure when interacting with strangers (Halkier, 2008). I therefore sought to create a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere by serving snacks and refreshments, introducing myself and the study thoroughly, and inviting the participants to introduce themselves to each other. I also started out by asking a more general question and

had all the participants take turns in answering it before I encouraged them to comment on each other's statements. I used the guideline in Table 3.3 below.

Focus group interview: What are your experiences with listening and learning Danish?

1. Introductions: name, job, country, level
2. What is the first thing that comes to mind when talking about listening (comprehension)?
3. Could you describe a typical situation from your everyday life where you listen to Danish?
4. In what situations do you find understanding Danish important?
5. What do you find the most difficult when listening to Danish?
6. What features of Danish do you find a challenge when you try to understand? (vowels, intonation, dialect, people speak fast... etc). Is this different from other languages?
7. Could you mention a specific comprehension problem in Danish?
8. Tell us about the last time you experienced problems with understanding Danish.
9. Have you learned other languages before? Did you experience the same kind of comprehension problems?
10. What is specific about learning Danish / How is learning Danish different from learning other languages?
11. Is understanding Danish more difficult than speaking/writing/reading? It is OK to disagree!
12. Do you have any tricks or strategies to help you understand Danish?
13. Do you do anything to become a better listener? Do have any recommendations for others that want to become better listeners in Danish?

Table 3.3. Focus group interview guidelines

As can e seen in Appendix D, I had invited the participants to an informal discussion, and the focus group interview was conducted semi-structurally, leaving room for free discussion to occur. The guidelines in Table 3.3 therefore, served as the interview guide for the interview and functioned as a checklist for what topics to use and cover in the discussion and as tool for me as a moderator to keep the conversation going. My role as a moderator was therefore to probe the participants and give all of the participants the opportunity to speak without anyone dominating too much (Vaughn, Schumm & Sinagub, 2015). The participants generally had interesting comments on listening in Danish as an L2, which added perspectives to the previously generated data from the interviews, and everyone participated in the discussion.

The focus group interview was almost fully transcribed for the cross-case analysis and can be seen in the supplementary appendix of transcriptions in Appendix F.

3.2.3.5 Diary studies

Diary studies on L2 listening have been used by Goh (1997, 2000), Flowerdew and Miller (2002) and Kemp (2009) to investigate learners' L2 listening problems and strategies in different settings, but also as a tool for helping the learners' become more aware of how they listen. Diary studies usually involve asking a number of people to record their experiences related to a particular subject over a period of time and is considered a useful tool for helping researchers as well as learners themselves gain awareness about behavior, thoughts and actions related to language use and learning in different contexts (e.g., Bailey, 1991). Diary studies via email, such as the ones in the present study, are a quick and inexpensive way of generating personal data on participants' thoughts and experiences, and the researcher has immediate access to the entries as opposed to hand-written or audio-recorded diary studies (e.g., Casanave, 2011). However, diary studies can be time consuming for the participant and therefore depend on the participant's engagement. If participants do not make entries directly after a listening event, they will have to rely on their memory to describe it later on in the same way as in an interview.

These things taken into consideration, the email method used in the present study had the character of an on-going interview or talk, and involved two participants reporting on their everyday listening experiences at work by email on the basis of my prompts. I prompted the participants via email every second day by asking questions such as: Have you been listening to Danish over the last couple of days? When? Did you think or notice anything specific? It varied how often the participants replied, but examples of what they wrote can be seen in the transcriptions appendix, see Appendix F. I ended the diary studies by meeting the two participants for individual interviews, where we talked about their recordings and their overall experiences of learning and listening in Danish as an L2 in the same way as the interviews described above in 3.2.3.1.

The participants who took part in the diary studies were recruited through the language classes Clavis did for the companies who are members of The Consortium for Global Talent

and were supposed to participate in a focus group, but since only two volunteered, I decided to try diary studies by email instead. The participants in the focus group interview as well as the diary studies were all attending classes at the time of the data generation, which was not the case for the participants at IBM, and the reflections the diary study and focus group participants shared on listening in Danish as an L2 in many ways seemed to expand on the reflections from the case study participants and interview participants from IBM Denmark. I therefore chose to include examples from these participants in the cross case analysis in Chapter 5 for discussing tendencies across data. In the following section, I describe how I analyzed the data.

3.3 Data analysis

As a way of constantly seeking a deeper and more trustworthy understanding of the phenomenon in focus and the participants' reporting on the phenomenon as recommended by Duff (2012), my analysis of the data had a cyclical character, the theoretical and empirical aspects of the study constantly influencing each other. The data analysis took place during most of study but primarily at two different points in time. The first data analysis phase was part of the data generation and involved the transcription of data and selection of data for writing the four case study portraits and presenting them to the participants. This phase took place in the spring of 2015, ending with the member-checking sessions in June 2015. The second data analysis phase took place from the end of the member-checking sessions until the last months of the project in the fall of 2015 and involved adding the comments from the member-checking sessions to the case study portraits in Chapter 4, as well as selecting and analyzing data for the cross-case analysis in Chapter 5. The phases and choices will be further addressed in the next paragraphs.

3.3.1 Case study portraits: conducting narratives and writing up the reports

The analysis of the case participants experiences with listening in Danish as L2 were like other qualitative analyses explorative and involved repeating cycles of transcriptions and categorization of the data (e.g., Silverman, 2008). However, although my data analysis was inductive and data driven, I had also anticipated categories and themes relevant to my

descriptions and interpretations of the case participants' reflections on the basis of the literature reviews. I was generally inspired by scholars such as Norton (2000), Ivanic (1998), Kinginger (2001), Leki (2007) and Larsen (2013), who all use case studies to provide in-depth descriptions of L2 learners and their contextual surroundings, making use of narratives to investigate, interpret and show the learners' beliefs, developments, backgrounds and identities. My intention with the case study portraits was therefore to give the readers a trustworthy and understandable picture on the complexities of the participants' experiences and the situation where the study took place from an insider perspective (e.g. Brown & Rodgers, 2002).

The initial data analysis of the case study data involved going through recordings and notes from the interviews, think-a-louds, observations and self-recordings in order to discuss the data with the participants in the post interviews. In this phase, I made notes and rough transcriptions of aspects that I wanted the participants to elaborate on, such as specific or general listening situations at work, strategies for handling different listening situations, and beliefs and experiences of language learning in general. After the post interviews, I started transcribing the interviews, think-a-loud sessions and post interviews in full and the recordings and observations roughly, as can be seen in the additional transcriptions appendix in Appendix F. The transcriptions of data used in the dissertation follow the conventions listed below in Section 3.3.4 and are chosen on the basis of relevance of showing the data.

During the transcription, I marked extracts related to language learning and the participants' backgrounds as well as extracts somehow related to listening. I then went through the transcriptions several times and listened to the recordings again if necessary. As Kirilova (2013) mentions, transcriptions make the data accessible to the readers and helps the researcher approach specific pieces of data, but transcriptions also need to be acknowledged as part of the analysis and interpretation of the data because the researcher constantly makes choices about what and how to transcribe (see also Roberts, 1997). In line with these assumptions, the transcription process served as an important part of the analysis, which was why I myself did all of the transcriptions.

The data selected for writing up the cases was chosen on the basis of theoretical inspirations as well as data types, and the research questions the data types seek to answer (see previous paragraphs on qualitative techniques). I decided to have three analytic foci in each case study, which are also used as headings in Chapter 4. The three foci are: **1) Investment in Danish, 2) Language at work, and 3) Experiences with listening** and they helped me structure the descriptions and interpretations of the data.

The first focus on investment in Danish relates to Norton's (2000) notion of investment, discussed in Chapter 2.2.3, and shows how the learners' histories and social circumstances influence their sense of themselves and their choices when it comes to learning and using Danish. The primary data used in this paragraph are interviews with the participants.

The second focus on language at work primarily takes its point of departure in the observations and self-recordings and seeks to show the case participants' language choices on regular workdays, primarily between English and Danish. The purpose of this focus is to describe when the case participants report that Danish is spoken to and around them as well as what their recordings show, thereby also investigating what listener roles are available to them. In this part of the case studies, I was inspired by interactional studies, such as Brouwer (2000) and Bremer et al. (1996), which both make use of Conversation Analysis in varying degrees to investigate how interlocutors take turns in conversations, and how these turns show indications of understanding or non-understanding.

The third and last focus regarding the participants' experiences with listening is centered on the data from the think-a-loud exercises, and with this focus, I seek to describe the listening problems and listening strategies the learners themselves reflect upon in relation to different listening situations as well as what takes place in the think-a-loud. This focus has even more analytical character than the other two paragraphs in that I make use of technical terms from psycholinguistic studies on, for example, listening problems and strategies, such as Goh (1997, 2000) and Vandergrift (2003, 2008). However, this third focus is still in many ways closely linked to the second one on language at work since it involves reflections about listening in specific and hypothetical situations, primarily at work.

Each case study portrait also contains my estimation of the participants' **L2 listening level** in Danish on the basis of the data with the participants as well as their own descriptions of their language and listening level. For this estimation, I made use of descriptors for L2 listening comprehension from The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) (European Council, 2001, p. 66). The CEFR is a guideline for learning, teaching and evaluating language competence across European languages (but also used in other parts of the world), and the six levels used in this framework are based on descriptors for what language learners are able to do in communicative situations in the L2. Even though *language level* is difficult to measure and define precisely, because a learner's language resources and ability to use language are context-dependent, a framework such as the CEFR is a useful indicator of language learners' approximate levels as a development over time from beginner to advanced. The six proficiency levels in the CEFR are based on a vast amount of research and are supposed to reflect a well-known and intuitive scale indicating what teachers as well as learners themselves experience being able to do in different L2 situations at different points of time in their language learning process. My estimation of the case participants' L2 listening level was based on the can-do descriptors from the CEFR on listening only and does therefore not reflect an estimation of their overall language level in Danish. The estimations are exemplified in the individual case portraits.

Except for these estimations, the case study portraits were largely kept free of theoretical references when sent for member-checking, as a way of making the portraits easier for the participants to read and more close to the participants' own descriptions, but some theoretical concepts were added later on. The final case study portraits can be seen in Chapter 4, where the case participants are further introduced. In the following paragraph, I turn to how the member-checking sessions were carried out, and in what way they influenced the study and the case portraits.

3.3.2 Member-checking: ethics, validity and trustworthiness

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), member-checking is an important technique for creating trustworthiness and dependability, but member-checking is also a controversial technique, which relates to the methodological discussion of validity versus trustworthiness in research. Member-checking refers to when the researcher 'checks' data, transcriptions,

analysis or interpretations with the participants who took part in the data generation by asking them to comment on accuracy or describe their immediate reactions (Cho & Trent, 2006). Researchers in favor of member-checking usually believe that validity can actually be achieved, and that the member-checks create “a possibility for a greater, more accurate, objective truth” (Cho & Trent, 2006, p. 323). By contrast, researchers with a constructivist point of view regard member-checking as unnecessary and even unsuitable for data generation because research always involves interpretation (Cho & Trent, 2006).

Lincoln and Guba (1985), however, argue for a stand in between the positivist and constructivist approach, claiming that member-checking gives participants in a research study the possibility of offering their point of view on the data, which adds to the credibility of the researcher’s interpretations in the same way as triangulation of data sources does. Even if the participants do not agree with an analysis, for example, the researcher has the possibility of openly describing the disagreements and argue for his or her interpretations and descriptions, thus arriving at a trustworthy analysis. In this way, member-checking is not used with the intention of reaching an ‘objective truth’ but with the underlying assumption that some interpretations may be better and more trustworthy than others. Following this assumption, asking the participants to share their thoughts on data or analysis may lead to more nuanced understandings or descriptions of how a phenomenon works or is experienced by the participants.

The member-checks in the present study were used with the methodological assumption that having the participants comment on the accuracy of my interpretations and descriptions served to optimize the credibility and trustworthiness of my analysis and study in general. Because the phenomenon in focus took place in the mind of the individual learners, as explained in Section 3.1, I found it necessary to involve the participants as much as possible in the data generation, and member-checking seemed like an important and essential technique when relying on the participants’ reflections as primary data source. The member-checks, however, also served an ethical purpose in the sense that the participants were allowed to see the portraits of themselves before the legal department at IBM did, offering them the possibility of ‘rejecting’ the descriptions or examples they did not want IBM or anyone else to see.

Part of the agreement with IBM was that they would receive a copy of the finished dissertation before it was handed in, and that they would somehow gain insight into my conclusions and perspectives on language use and learning for international employees. Although there was no intention on the part of the legal department at IBM Denmark (contact person Kristina Tønners) to share the dissertation with the entire company, I wanted my participants to be aware of the fact that it was a public dissertation, which their managers and colleagues in principle had access to. The case participants had been given pseudonyms like all other participants, but since the point of the portraits was to show real people with real experience, the thick descriptions of each case participant meant that they could most likely be recognized by their closest co-workers. Because of this, I deleted private or work-related facts if requested by the participants in the member-checking sessions as well as in the preliminary phases of the data generation. At the member-checking session, three out of four of the case participants found that the portraits pictured them well, and that they could easily be recognized by their closest co-workers, but they did not have a problem with that. One case participant preferred being as unrecognizable as possible and therefore asked me to change a few things in the portrait and also told me some things were off the record during the data generation.

Prior to the member-checks with the case participants, I had settled a time and a date for the meet-up as well as the date they would receive the portrait by email. I sent it with my comments in the margin, and in some cases without conclusion or summary because I wanted to show the participants that it was a work in progress and make it more legitimate for them to comment on the text. In the email, I mentioned that any comments were welcome, and that the text was supposed to be a selection of data and not an entirely finished text. Two participants wrote me back before the meet-up, saying that they found the portraits pictured them quite well and that they only had minor comments. When meeting up with each participant, we small talked before looking at the text together. I took notes along the way and incorporated these notes in the final case study portraits. In the following paragraph, I describe how, after having conducted the member checks, I compared the cases as well as the rest of the data in a cross-case analysis.

3.3.3 Cross case analysis: tendencies and dependability

As Duff (2012) describes, it is usually part of the procedure when conducting a multiple case study to start out by analyzing the individual cases and then conduct “a comparative cross-case or collective analysis” (p. 163) as a way of legitimizing the relevance of the conclusions of a case study. As previously explained in Section 3.1, researchers can make use of different techniques, such as triangulation of data sources, theories and methods, for creating dependability and trustworthiness in an analysis. Having and comparing multiple cases is a way of discussing aspects of the phenomenon in focus (e.g. Stake, 2005) and adding dependability and trustworthiness to tendencies across data. The last part of the data analysis therefore involved analyzing the cases as well as the rest of the data for similarities and tendencies in a cross-case analysis including all the data collected for the study. While the purpose of case study portraits was to show how listening in an L2 is experienced by individual learners, the cross-case analysis serves to illustrate how listening in Danish as an L2 is experienced by several international employees with Danish as an L2.

When analyzing and selecting data for examples in the cross-case analysis, I listened to the recordings of the 14 interviews with other international employees at IBM Denmark, the focus group interview and the two diary studies with participants from other international companies in Denmark. I took notes when the participants shared relevant thoughts on learning and listening in Danish as L2. I almost fully transcribed the focus group interview, as can be seen in Appendix F, but only fully transcribed extracts from the other interviews when I found that they expanded and added relevant information to the analysis in the cases. While going through the recordings of the entire data, I marked and noted, for example, when the participants described listening situations, mentioned strategies for dealing with listening in different situations at work, or explicated beliefs about learning and listening in Danish. The coding was therefore an intuitive categorization based on what kept coming up in relation to listening, but was also related to the theoretical concepts used in the case study portraits.

After having tried different approaches to comparing the experiences of the case participants as well as the rest of the participants experiences, I decided to write up the cross-case analysis in sections addressing my research questions on *when* the international employees listen at work, *what* problems they experience, *why* some situations are more difficult to listen in than

others, and *how* the international employees handle different listening situations at work. This way of comparing the cases and linking the case participants' experiences with the other participants' experiences allowed me to address relevant methodological and theoretical aspects of (investigating) L2 listening. As can be seen in Chapter 5, I made use of tables to compare the case portraits, as recommended by Duff (2012), and included relevant examples from the entire data. The cross-case analysis showed tendencies across the entire data, which had relevant theoretical as well as practical implications for investigating, teaching and learning L2 listening. This is further addressed in the conclusion in Chapter 6. In the next section, I outline the transcription conventions used in the data analysis.

3.3.4 Transcription conventions

,	very short pause
.	falling intonation followed by a short pause
...	longer pause
?	rising intonation, as in question
!	emphasis
/	sequence interrupted by another speaker
< >	overlapping speech
()	short turns or backchanneling speech within a longer turn of other speaker
xxx	transcriber doubt
(...)	sequence left out
[]	comments in text, for example [laughs]
COM:	comments after text extracts
<i>Italics</i>	speech in Danish
Spanish	other languages
ENG:	my translation to English

Table 3.4. Transcription conventions

The transcriptions of data in the analyses have been adapted to more closely resemble written than oral language with the purpose of presenting the participants more favorably (as requested by the participants in the member-checking sessions) as well as for the ease of the readers since the focus is on the content and not the form of the language. The conventions can be seen in Table 3.4 above. Furthermore, I have translated the extracts in Danish into English, as shown in the examples below. I have tried to translate the content as closely as possible with the aim of reflecting the actual language use of the participants. This means that the translations also reflect deviations from the target-like conventions of the target language. The two examples below show how Danish is translated either below a turn or in comments in a turn. The Danish words or utterances are kept in italics in the translated examples to show what was said in Danish.

Ex 1: translations following turns:

- Fc2: So it is actually going to be used what we are
- Maria: [laughs] no what I am doing. It is how my brain works when I have someone talking Danish to me
- Fc2: So you also have a measuring on you
- Maria: No no [laughs]
- Fc1: *Men det kan du jo ikke se nogen steder for vi taler jo altid engelsk til dig*
- ENG:** *But you won't be able to see that since we always speak English to you*
- Maria: *Øh hvad siger du?*
- ENG:** *Ehm what are you saying?*
- (Maria, day 3, rec. 11)

Ex 2: translations within turns:

- Pilar: for example they can have an informal meeting, and I just go there and they *skift* [Eng: *switch*] they change to English (okay), and sometimes I try to follow in Danish and no no *jeg kan forstå* [Eng: I understand] and try I can try to be more integrate to that
- (Pilar, interview, p. 4)

In the case study portrait of Tomasz, all extracts are numbered and translated from Danish to English because all of the data with Tomasz were in Danish. The original extracts are placed

in Appendix E. Furthermore, the entire rough transcriptions of the data with the case participants as well as the focus group interview can be seen in the Transcriptions Appendix. Appendix F gives an overview of the transcriptions in the additional appendix.

3.4 Limitations

As is the case with most other studies, there are aspects of the present study that, in retrospect, could have been optimized or done differently, but since the study was explorative, the implications of the methodological techniques and choice are also part of the results. The strengths and limitations of the study have been touched upon throughout this entire chapter in relation to the data generation and individual methodological techniques, but it is relevant to mention specific parts of the methodology that could perhaps have added further perspectives to the data generation if carried out differently.

Firstly, it would have been interesting to have used video recordings instead of audio in order to investigate the context of the recorded listening situations at work, especially in relation to gesture, gaze and physical surroundings. This would likely have led to different analytical foci, however, and may have changed the study altogether. Using action research as part of the data generation and overall principles of the study could also have added interesting perspectives to the participants' reflections on specific listening situations if they had been trained to reflect upon their actions and thoughts immediately after listening in Danish as L2 at work through oral or written journals. Including more participants from different departments, but also different companies, and asking them to record for longer periods of time may also have added interesting data to the investigation of L2 listening at work. However, it is important to note that the data generation ended when I no longer gained new knowledge about international employees' experiences with listening. There is therefore no guarantee that more data would have added new perspectives.

Two important features of the data generation that I would have liked to have improved are related to the think-a-louds and post interviews. First, the technical equipment used to carry out the think-a-louds could have been better, and the extracts could have been used more consistently for comparison. As already explained in 3.2.3.3, the think-a-louds initially served

as awareness-raising exercises and were therefore loosely planned, but since they turned out to generate important data on listening strategies and background knowledge, it would have made sense to use the same extracts in each session. Second, the post interviews should preferably have included elements of stimulated recalls by playing back the participants' recordings, but because of time constraints, as previously explained, the post interviews only involved me and the participants referring to recorded incidents based on recollection. It would, however, have been interesting to play the recordings for the participants and ask them elaborate on what happened. The overall limitations of investigating listening will be further addressed in the conclusion of the entire study in Chapter 6. The analysis of the data is presented in Chapters 4 and 5 after the summary of this chapter in the next section.

3.5 Summary

In this chapter, I described and discussed the overall methodological principles of the study as well as the individual qualitative techniques used to generate the data. I also addressed how I analyzed the data in different phases for writing up the case study reports in Chapter 4 and the cross-case analysis in Chapter 5. The methodology of the study aimed to capture cognitive as well as social aspects of L2 listening, and the combination of data generation techniques and the large amount of participants were fruitful in investigating L2 listening from different angles and added to the credibility and dependability of the study. I will discuss limitations, perspectives and implications of the study at the end of Chapter 5 and in the conclusion of the dissertation in Chapter 6. I now turn to the analysis of the empirical data from the four case participants in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Case study portraits - Individual perspectives on L2 listening

In this chapter, I focus on four individual adult learners' experiences with L2 listening at work. As described in Chapter 3.2.2, all four case study participants work at IBM Denmark and have been given pseudonyms. As Table 4.1 below shows, the case participants work in different departments at IBM Denmark in different functions, and all four have come to Denmark either to work or to study. They have all been in Denmark for more than five years, and they all have families or partners in Denmark. They are all 30-40 years old and have all participated in at least one module of state-funded Danish classes, but their levels of Danish vary significantly as do their language learning backgrounds. Last, but not least, they are all part of the group of international employees, described in Chapter 3.2.1, who plan to stay in Denmark for a longer period of time, as opposed to the group of international employees who are in Denmark on a limited contract, and this naturally influences their investment in Danish, which will be further discussed in the cross-case analysis in Chapter 5. Table 4.1 below also gives an overview of the data techniques used in each individual case study.

The purpose of the case study portraits is to describe how four individual learners experience listening in an L2, and how their individual backgrounds, language level and social contexts influence their listening comprehension. The cases are presented according to proficiency level with the learner with the lowest level of Danish first (Maria) and the highest at the end (Tomasz), which gives a sense of development similar to how language learners go from beginner's level to advanced. Language level seems to have an important impact on the listening comprehension problems the participants experience as well as the strategies they choose and have available to them in different listening situations at work, and these aspects are also relevant to the following cross-case discussion. However, an important point to be made is that language level on its own does not explain how the participants in the portraits handle different listening situations at work, in that the social context. Their individual investment in Danish and listening in specific situations also influence their listening comprehension.

As described in Chapter 3.3.1, I have divided all four portraits into the three analytical foci: 1) Investment in Danish, 2) Language at work, and 3) Experiences with listening, and all four portraits are concluded with comments from the member-checking sessions. However, the structure within the different case study portraits varies depending on the generated data and the individual stories of the learners. I conclude the chapter with a summary of the four cases.

	Maria	Pilar	Robert	Tomasz
Country of Origin	Italy	Spain	South Africa	Poland
Age	Ca. 40	Ca. 40	Ca. 40	Ca 30
Reason to come to DK	Job	Study	Job	Study
Position at IBM	Project manager	Back office role	Technical specialist	Graduate
Civil status	Italian husband; pregnant with second child	Danish husband; 2 children	South African wife; 2 children	Polish girlfriend
Time in Denmark (all data collected in 2012)	Nine years	Six years plus three years from 1995-98	Around four years	Six years
Danish Education	2.5 modules	1 module	2.5 modules	5 modules
CEFR listening level	A2	B1	B2	C1
Type of data	Preliminary interview Think-a-loud 1 day of observation + recording 3-4 days of self-recordings Member-checking	Preliminary interview Think-a-loud 3-4 days of self-recordings Member-checking	Preliminary interview Think-a-loud 1 day of observation + recording 3 days of self-recordings Post interview Member-checking	Preliminary interview Think-a-loud 3 days of self-recordings Post interview Member-checking

Table 4.1. Overview of case participants

4.1 Maria: ‘It was always on my mind to learn Danish’

Maria came to Denmark in 2003 because of a postdoc position in Natural Science at the University of Copenhagen. In 2005, Maria married her Italian husband, they had their daughter, and in 2008, she started working at IBM after her contract as a postdoc at the university expired. At the time of the data generation, Maria was expecting her second child and about to go on leave, and since I was also pregnant at the time we met, we immediately had a lot to talk about. Maria was very cooperative and easy to make arrangements with and in general seemed happy to participate in the study even though she rarely used Danish at work and described her language competence in Danish as ‘very bad’ (Interview, p. 8). However, Maria’s story gives an insight into how an international employee with a low proficiency in Danish deals with L2 listening situations at work.

4.1.1 Investment in Danish

When Maria first came to Denmark, she wanted to learn Danish because she was interested in knowing “more about the Danish culture” (Maria, interview, p.1). She started Danish classes a few months after she arrived, but when she reached the third level out of five, she stopped taking classes. She was pregnant with her first child, working during the day and taking classes in the evening, but she also lost motivation because she did not pass the test for the next level of Danish classes because of her “terrible pronunciation” (Maria, e-mail, July 2012). Maria felt confirmed in her own *beliefs* (Barcelos & Kalaja, 2003) about herself as a poor language learner when she failed the test, and she generally regarded herself as a less successful language learner, as the following example indicates:

My understanding of Danish is low. I find it very difficult. And I do not hide to myself that I am not really skilled in languages. Not really part of my DNA :-)

(Maria, e-mail, July 2012)

Maria explained that she had English classes in school when she was a child, but that she never practiced speaking and listening in English since the teachers mostly focused on writing and grammar. When Maria came to Denmark, she had to brush up her English to be able to participate in the English-speaking environment at the university where she was working. She was therefore trying to learn two languages at the same time, but since English was more

important for her immediate participation at work, she put more effort into becoming proficient in English than in Danish.

Maria's 'lack of DNA' for languages therefore also seems to be related to her prior experiences with language learning, or lack thereof, and not just a matter of genes. It may, however, also be related to the perfectionism she herself describes as a hindrance to actually using Danish in her everyday life, even though she finds that she had progressed a little over the years, as the following example shows:

Maria: I have Danish in my ears so I am more mature now than when I started learning Danish. Then I was totally empty, but now I remember things and make more connections or links in my head. Aha! So this is what it means. So I am just trying to

Charlotte: So you do feel like in some sense you have improved

Maria: I feel that I, it is in my head but I have to get it out [laughs], and it is the hard part because I am a perfectionist, so I don't speak if I don't know it [laughs]

(Maria, interview, p. 7)

Maria does not want to use Danish if it does not sound right, and it seems that her perfectionism may also be activated when she is listening in Danish, as the following example, where Maria explains what she finds the most difficult about Danish, indicates:

It is the listening, the listening. I might try to... I also don't have this huge barrier when trying to speak it. Then the person on the other side might understand me or not, but I can speak a little bit of Danish, even if people do not understand me, but it is understand others. If they speak slow it is easier, but I still don't have a huge vocabulary so I miss a lot of the meaning because I do not understand the single word, sometimes you understand one word and you catch the entire context but if you do not know that key word then you are lost

(Maria, interview, p. 9)

In this extract, Maria ascribes her lack of understanding to a small vocabulary, but it also seems that she does not want to participate in interaction if she is not entirely sure she has understood. She prefers to understand every single word, and it is important for her to communicate fluently and unproblematically without losing face, so in most situations, Maria avoids using Danish. In fact, she explains that the only place she speaks Danish "with freedom" is when her daughter has Danish friends over because children are less judgmental than adults (Maria, interview, p. 13).

At the beginning of her stay in Denmark, Maria tried speaking Danish with a friend, and when she started working at IBM Denmark, she asked around for Danish classes, but neither worked out. Looking back, Maria finds that she could have focused more on learning Danish when she was in between jobs, but at that time, she was not sure she and her family would stay in Denmark. As Maria says, “It was always on my mind to learn Danish” (Maria, interview p. 3), but she keeps finding it difficult to find time for classes:

Maria: I could put more effort... But it is also something that you learn. There was a period where I was very stressed because I had too many things, and then I also got weak and I got sick. I had pneumonia. I was home for a month with a small child around, so that experience, I learned from that experience that, I don't have to reach the limits. This is why I put Danish also as lower priority. I don't want to stress myself either psychologically or physically anymore. You have only one life. Of course Danish is important, but it is more important to be healthy and have work and be happy with the family, so if I don't understand what people are saying at lunch, then I am sorry it is not my problem. I cannot do much more than that right now.

Charlotte: So you just think, I didn't understand, that's okay

Maria: No not really [laughs], but I try to hide myself it's okay, but of course I am sorry but I cannot do anything

(Maria, interview, p. 12)

Maria had made a conscious choice not to focus that much on Danish at the time of the data generation, but as the extract above indicates, she does not seem wholeheartedly happy with the decision. She can live with not being able to understand what people are saying around her in Danish at work, but she feels sorry for her daughter for having a mother who does not speak Danish. For example, Maria wants to teach her daughter that socializing with other people is important, but she finds it difficult to be a good role model when she is not able to communicate in Danish with the other parents at school:

I am also shy so I don't want to bother other to speak English just because of me. And some of them also are not so good in speaking English. So there are a lot of smiling, a lot of hi, but often it stops there, so there is no big conversation with me and the other parents in the class. That is... I really feel sorry for my daughter

(Maria, interview, p. 12)

Maria generally expresses a lot of mixed feelings about learning (or not learning) Danish both in relation to her daughter and her work. Her daughter attends a Danish school and is beginning to need help with homework above Maria's level of Danish, which is a reason Maria would like to know more Danish. However, taking classes would mean time away from

her daughter. Maria therefore hopes that she is able to do some brushing up while being on leave with her second child. When she had her first child, Maria wanted to participate in a Danish-speaking maternity group, which is a group coordinated by a local nurse for mothers on leave living in the same neighborhood, but the nurse recommended an English-speaking group, and Maria ended up never going to the maternity group meetings. During her current leave, she wants to join a Danish maternity group even if the nurse tells her not to, and as she says, “I will just be silent not talking, but I would like to do that” (Maria, interview, p. 15).

In general, Maria seems to feel that she has been denied access to some of the actual opportunities for practicing Danish in the form of the maternity group, but also at work, as will be described in the next section. However, her own investment in Danish has also varied significantly over the years. In many ways, Maria’s incentive to learn Danish seems more related to her *ought-to self* (Dönyei, 2009) and the feeling that she *should* learn Danish since she has been in Denmark for nine years, has two children here, and is the only non-Danish-speaking employee in her team at work. However, Maria also explains that practicing Danish at work is not really an option because it would make her performance “very very low” (Maria, interview, p. 2), and she generally seems to find it difficult to prioritize learning Danish. In addition, Maria’s focus on wanting to be perceived positively by others also seems to play a role in her language use at work, and her beliefs about herself as a language learner may be influencing her *self-efficacy* (Graham, 2011) for actually trying to use Danish at work both productively and receptively. She prefers using English at work because “it is very professional” (Maria, interview, p. 11) and she therefore often avoids using Danish as much as possible but has developed strategies for participating in both Danish and English when she finds it important.

4.1.2 Language at work

While working at the university, Danish did not seem that important to Maria. She only had a few Danish colleagues, and the environment was very international, so the only time people spoke Danish around her was at the weekly breakfast where “all the foreigners were doing something else” (Maria, interview, p. 2). After a while, Maria stopped going to the breakfast because she was unable to follow the conversation. In her first team at IBM, Maria only had Danish male colleagues with whom she had very little in common. They were all, as Maria

expressed it, highly proficient in English, but they did not make any effort to converse during lunch, for example, and neither did she. However, it was not until Danish was chosen over English for a conference call meeting that Maria really felt non-included:

There was a meeting at the phone and there was an announcement important announcement that he had to say to the all the team, and since there was people on the phone from Århus and there were people around, so the meeting was at the phone. So I asked him if the call could have been in English, and he said no because he wanted the team to understand exactly what he wanted to say, and this meant that I was not part of the team or what [laughs]. So I really felt bad that I... So and I never asked him again to speak English, but I was just listening to Danish not understanding anything at all. So that was life part of the life

(Maria, interview, p. 4)

As Maria explains, she respected and understood her manager's choice of Danish for the call since many of the Danish colleagues were not fluent in English, including the manager himself, but it still made her feel uncomfortable. Fortunately, Maria's next manager preferred speaking English because a lot of terms used at IBM are in English anyway, and in the team where Maria worked at the time of the data generation, more or less everything was in English. As Maria described:

They are too kind with me because they speak a lot of English with me [laughs]. So meetings everywhere everything for me is in English just because I am there. And of course I feel not comfortable if we are ten in the room and we are only me speaking English and they have to switch to English because of me, but otherwise I cannot follow. So either... So IBM... I am IBM'er employee and the language, the company language is English, so if you want me here [laughs] speak English, because Danish I don't understand, and it's difficult for me the language

(Maria, interview, p. 2)

As this example indicates, Maria does not like that her colleagues has to switch to English because of her, even though the official institutional agreement of language use at IBM is English, because she knows that not all of her colleagues are that proficient in English. However, one of Maria's colleagues (male colleague 1 (Mc1)) has expressed enthusiasm about improving his English skills because of her, and this colleague referred to learning from Maria the day I observed Maria at work when I told him that I only studied participants who were not fluent in Danish:

Mc1: She's not fluent
 Maria: No I am not
 Mc1: And I am not fluent in English. So we learn from each other
 (Maria, observation, rec. 3)

Many of Maria's self-recordings include conversations about her Danish competence, such as the one above, where Maria is trying to explain her participation in the study. Many of these conversations involve what seems to be one of Maria's closest female colleagues (Fc1), who is present in most recordings, and it seems that her relationship with Maria allows her to comment and tease Maria about her Danish competence.

In the extract below, Maria and Fc1 are sitting in a meeting room dialing in on a conference call waiting for the other participants of the meeting to arrive. Another female colleague (Fc2) arrives and addresses Fc1 in Danish. When they stop, Maria tells Fc2 in English that they are waiting for the other participants to arrive. Fc2 asks Maria if she is recording, and they briefly laugh about the misunderstandings that often occur even though they all speak English. The two Danish colleagues then switch to Danish for a while until Maria asks them in English if they know who else is coming. They go on in English for a while, and Fc1 starts reading a description of the present study that Maria has brought along to the meeting to inform the others about why she is recording. The conversation continues as follows:

Fc2: So it is actually going to be used what we are
 Maria: [laughs] no what I am doing. It is how my brain works when I have someone talking Danish to me
 Fc2: So you also have a measuring on you
 Fc1: No no [laughs]
 Fc1: *Men det kan du jo ikke se nogen steder for vi taler jo altid engelsk til dig*
 ENG: *But you won't be able to see that since we always speak English to you*
 Maria: *Øh hvad siger du?*
 ENG: *Ehm what are you saying?*
 Fc1: *Vi taler jo altid engelsk til dig (ja) så det kan du jo ikke måle, vi er alt for flinke*
 ENG: *We always speak English to you (yes) so you cannot measure that, we are too nice*
 Maria: *Ja*
 (Maria, day 3, rec. 11)

A third Danish colleague (Fc3) arrives and speaks Danish to Fc2. Fc1 joins in, and they continue in Danish for a couple of minutes until Maria starts the meeting. Maria is the moderator of the meeting, and the first point on the agenda is her participation in the study:

- Maria: (...) She is interested in people who are very bad in Danish [laughs, others laughing too]
- Fc1: And you qualify for that [laughing]
- Maria: [laughing] yeah I am qualified. So to understand how my brain interacts with the Danish language in a Danish work environment. So if you feel that I should stop recording, just let me know.
- Fc3: But if we speak English here, how will she /
- Maria: That's the problem everyone here speak English to me [laughs] so
- Fc4: But everybody /
- Maria: But you just, you should just be natural. But sometimes you speak Danish eh, and then I might /
- Fc1: And you will be quiet [smiling]
- Maria: Yeah [laughing], and I will be quiet yeah [laughing]. Just be natural, yeah
- Fc3: Does that mean we should speak Danish to you?
- Maria: No no, just do what you used to do
- (Maria, day 3, rec. 11)

In this extract, Maria positions herself as having a very low competence in Danish, and Fc1 teases Maria about participating in a study about Danish when she rarely uses it. The other colleagues seem surprised that Maria is participating in the study since they always speak English to her, and they are perhaps also confused about whether she actually wants to learn Danish or not. Maria is aware of their confusion but tries to point out that they actually do speak Danish around her, which is quite obvious in the first extract from the meeting, and that she sometimes tries to understand. Fc1 goes on teasing Maria about being quiet when they speak Danish, and even though it shows that Fc1 is allowed to tease Maria because of their close relationship, it also shows that humor is a way of covering up critical remarks otherwise not accepted at work, in line with Holmes and Stubbe's (2003) study of power and politeness at the workplace, as described in Chapter 2.3. Maria's participation in the study makes it legitimate for her colleagues to comment on her language competence, and every time Maria's recordings become a topic, Fc1 starts switching back and forth between English and Danish even though Maria and Fc1 seem to normally be speaking English with each other.

Fc1 also explicitly comments that she finds Maria's competence in Danish higher than Maria shows, and that she thinks Maria ought to practice a bit more, as the next extract indicates.

In this recording, Maria and Fc1 meet an Italian colleague, whom they both know. He addresses them in Danish, and when Fc1 switches to English to include Maria, the Italian colleague (Ic) steers the conversation towards Maria's lack of competence in Danish. He points out that he made the same mistake about speaking English at the beginning of his stay in Denmark, but that he has made a choice now to use Danish as much as possible, and he thinks Maria should do the same. The conversation continues as follows:

- Ic: (...) So I understand you
- Maria: We Italians are very hard for languages
- Fc1: *Prøv at tænke på at nu har du to børn der skal vokse op i Danmark*
- ENG:** *But think about your two children who are growing up in Denmark*
- Maria: Yeah but they can manage
- Ic: That's why I am Sicilian. I am not Italian I am Sicilian because I can speak many languages [laughs]
- Maria: Yeah, I'm not skilled. I have many qualities but not languages [smiling]
- Ic: Yeah but not languages [smiling]
- Fc1: You're beautiful, and tall, and blond [laughs]
- Maria: [laughs] well I can't be perfect right
- Fc1: *Nej, men du kan godt tale dansk, og du kan meget mere end du tror*
- ENG:** *No, but you do actually speak Danish, and much more than you think*
- Ic: *Du skal bare høre lidt mere eller prøve at forstå det lidt mere, så du skal du kan tale engelsk til dem, men så du kan forvente de tale dansk til dig. Forstår du hvad jeg mener?*
- ENG:** *You just have to listen a bit more or try to understand it a bit more, then you speak English to them, but you can expect them to speak Danish to you. Do you know what I mean?*
- FC1: *Det gjorde vi faktisk med Jan vores hollandske studerende*
- ENG:** *We actually did that with Jan our Dutch student*
- Maria: Yeah but you cannot compare Holland Dutch with Italian.
- (Maria, day 3, rec. 10)

In this conversation, Fc1 seems to try to push Maria in a friendly way into using more Danish, but Maria is a bit tired of the subject and defends herself by saying that she is inhibited by her Italian background, and she expresses similar beliefs about lacking DNA for languages as she did in the interview. The conversation continues for a while in both English and Danish until

Maria changes the topic by asking Fc1 about her upcoming trip to Rome. After this, the Italian colleague addresses Maria in Italian, and Maria also switches to Italian. Fc1 immediately starts joking about not being welcome, at which Maria laughs and asks in Danish if she is supposed to speak Danish now, perhaps giving Fc1 a little of her own medicine. Fc1 leaves and the two Italians continue in Italian.

As this extract shows, both Danish and English (and sometimes other languages) are used during a normal workday for Maria, but there seems to be a clear division of when Danish and English are allowed, which is similar to the division described in Lønsmann's (2011) study (see Chapter 2.4). Maria's recordings show that in more formal work-related situations, such as meetings, the language is English because everyone is addressed and needs to understand the content, but the beginnings and ends of meetings are often in Danish. As the example from the meeting above showed, Maria was not part of the interaction at the meeting before she was directly addressed in English, and her listener role from (non-understanding) overhearer or non-participant in Danish changed to participant. It is generally crucial for Maria's understanding of Danish as well as for her participation in the specific listening situation, which listener role she takes on or is positioned in since her level of Danish requires a large amount of concentration, as will be further addressed in the following section as well as in the cross-case analysis in Chapter 5.

4.1.3 Experiences with listening

As described in the previous sections, Maria's primary language at work is English, but Danish is often spoken around her. This, however, does not mean that Maria actually tries to listen, as she says, "It's like I have a filter in my ear so I don't hear Danish" (Maria, interview, p.2). Maria rarely takes on the *listener role* as *overhearer* (Rost, 2011) but only tries to understand Danish if she is a participant in the conversation:

If I am concentrated to work and there is talking around me then I am blocked because I am doing something else. I am not in a conversation, they are not talking directly to me it is like music I am not hearing

(Maria, interview, p. 16)

As mentioned, what listener role Maria chooses and how she is addressed are important to her understanding, and while concentrating on work, she cannot also focus on Danish, just as she is unable to listen to Danish radio while driving a car. However, Maria describes how she can easily listen to her colleagues speaking English around her while working, which indicates that she processes English automatically but has to consciously focus on listening to comprehend Danish.

However, being in a listener role as participant in an interaction, where Danish is spoken directly to her, does not seem to cause Maria that much trouble in the recordings. This was the case in the example with the Italian colleague and Fc1 as well as in the following example from Maria's recordings of an after-work dinner with most of her team:

- Mc1: *Kender du den bog der hedder Sølvskeen? Silver... spoon?*
ENG: *Do you know the book called Sølvskeen? Silver... spoon?*
 Maria: *Ja, den er very famous... book*
ENG: *Yeah, it is very famous... book*
 Mc1: *Den er oversat til dansk.*
ENG: *It is translated into Danish.*
 Maria: *Okay. You have it in Danish <okay>*
 Mc1: *<Ja> vi har Sølvskeen derhjemme <og den øh>*
ENG: *<Yes> we have The Silverspoon at home <and it ehm>*
 Fc1: *<Er det italiensk?> For jeg kender den ikke*
ENG: *<Is it Italian?> Because I don't know it*
 Mc1: *Ja det er italiensk*
ENG: *Yes it is Italian*
 Maria: *Kind of like the bible of the Italian cook*
 Fc1: *<That's why I don't have it> [smiling]*
 Mc1: *<Og det er virkelig også en bibel> for vores ældste datter <når hun skal lave mad>*
ENG: *<And it is really a bible> for our oldest daughter <when she is cooking>*
 Maria: *<Yeah I don't have it> actually I asked my mom if she could make it as a present for Christmas but it was too heavy to bring*
 Fc1: *It could be interesting, du skal da have den på dansk*
ENG: *It could be interesting, you should have it in Danish*
 Maria: *No! [laughs]*
 (Maria, day 4, rec. 14)

In this example, Maria is directly addressed in Danish by Mc1, who is the colleague who described himself as not-fluent in English. Maria is a key participant in the conversation, and she replies in English but listens in Danish, and everyone seems to understand each other, which they show in their communicative turns by indicating a sufficient understanding (Brouwer, 2000; Bremer et al. (1996), see Chapter 2.5). To participate in the interactions at the dinner, Maria uses a strategy of repeating in English what her colleagues say in Danish to make sure she understands. She uses this strategy a couple of times throughout the entire evening where the conversation is primarily in Danish, except for the parts of the conversation where Maria herself is very active in English, and the strategy of repeating is therefore only used when the interaction is in Danish, and she is checking her comprehension.

Maria also uses a strategy of starting a conversation in English a few times, which she in the interview described as a strategy she used consciously when listening to her colleagues speaking Danish:

Charlotte: So what do you do when you for example hear your colleagues speaking Danish, you try to get words or

Maria: Yeah, I try. I try to catch up, but if I'm totally lost then I think I do my own thing [laughs]. Or if I see the discussion, the dialog, is concluded, I start a new subject in English

(Maria, interview, p. 9)

This strategy is not a strategy for communicating in Danish but for participating in the interaction in general, but Maria reports this strategy as a strategy for coping with listening situations in Danish at work. This may indicate that her strategies for comprehension and strategies for communication are not separate cognitive and social strategies for her, and Maria's explanation of how she uses the strategy of language switch can be seen as both a strategy for participation as well as a strategy for compensating for lack of the expected linguistic knowledge because it makes her mentally tired to try to understand in Danish. This, for example, happens at the dinner with colleagues when Maria tells Fc1 that she is tired and therefore not able to follow the others' conversation in Danish (Maria, day 4, rec. 14), as well as in the when Maria explains that she finds being active in an interaction a condition for understanding:

When you have a conversation you have to be active, and if you lose the moment then everything that you have understood so far is lost. And because you didn't catch the right moment when you can say something, or when you want to say

something you just start understanding and then, ah okay, this is what they are talking about, okay, what can I say here, and then they change subject and then, okay, never mind then it's gone [laughs]

(Maria, think-a-loud, p. 4)

Maria here describes how being able to understand and think of how to participate in a conversation in Danish at the same time is difficult for her. She needs time to “elaborate” (see next example), and participating in a conversation means being quick and active. Maria also explains that knowing the topic of an interaction is very important to her comprehension and, as the example above showed, it is much easier for her to follow conversations in Danish if she can supplement a bit in English to make sure she understands.

Maria's perfectionism again seems to be a plausible explanation for why she has difficulty dealing with ambiguity in her comprehension (see Chapter 2.2.2 on strategies and The Good Language Learner) and may also explain the tendency she seems to have to focus on bottom-up processing to understand specific words instead of using the context. However, Maria also lacks actual linguistic knowledge for dealing with different listening texts, and according to Goh (2000), lower level learners have a tendency to make use of bottom-up processing (see Chapter 2.7). Maria's strategies for participation and comprehension therefore seem related to her actual ability to understand but also to her beliefs about her own language level and thus her self-efficacy as well as her investment in the specific listening situations.

At the dinner, all participants were potentially direct addressees and participants most of the time, and it is therefore not always clear who is expected to participate. Furthermore, most of the conversation was in Danish, and Maria was often silent, but as soon as she was directly addressed or the conversation was in English, she was very active. Maria clearly wants to participate in interactions with her colleagues, but when she is not directly addressed in Danish, and thus not expected to reply, she easily drifts off and has trouble following. Maria describes similar experiences with listening and participating at lunch:

Maria: I can understand something, and if I am in the conversation from the start and there is some English and then Danish then I can follow, but if I jump in later then I am lost [laughs]. What are they talking about? Or it happened last week that we went down to the stairs to lunch, and a colleague of mine said something when we were approaching the canteen, and I didn't get it, and then, when I saw what was the food I understood what she said because /

Charlotte: Ah she said something about the food

Maria: Yeah, she said that we were going to have *smørrebrød* but she said it so fast, that sentence was in my head but I couldn't elaborate it, and then when I saw the *smørrebrød* I said: Ah! So that's what you said. So it's a matter of understanding [laughs]

COM: Smørrebrød often translated as 'open sandwiches' and is a traditional Danish lunch

(Maria, interview, p. 8)

The listener role therefore plays an important part in Maria's comprehension in Danish, but so does the timing of her participation as well as the *co-text* (Halliday & Hasan, 1991) and the *contextualization cues* (Gumperz, 1964). In the think-a-loud, Maria described how lack of visual clues for contextualization, in the form of looking at people's gestures and body language as well as, for example, slides or agendas, makes it very difficult for her to understand, and she referred to the team meetings, which as mentioned earlier, are the only meetings Maria attends in Danish on a regular basis. Maria explained that these meetings are of a very informal character, which means that there is no agenda and no one taking the minutes because it is "almost free talking" (Maria, observation, rec. 4).

Maria also mentioned that she mostly understands what the topics at the meetings are if she is in the room, but she has tried participating from home on call, which meant she barely understood anything. As she explained, she generally finds understanding difficult when she cannot see people:

But for me it's very hard to understand. It might be the same as on the phone right, the quality of the sound is not so good as being in front of the person. So I have huge difficulties understanding Danish on the phone or an equivalent

(Maria, think-a-loud, p. 2)

However, when listening in on call for a meeting, Maria is actually in a listener role as addressee and therefore has the possibility of asking for repetition or clarification, but Maria prefers asking afterwards in order not to interrupt the meeting. Unfortunately, the meetings are at 3 o'clock on Fridays, and people usually go home afterwards, which means that Maria rarely has a chance to ask her colleagues about the things she does not understand directly after the meeting. Maria explained that she may write one of her colleagues an e-mail with a question, presumably because this way of showing lack of understanding is less face-threatening, but it also gives her time to reflect upon the things she does not understand immediately.

The team meetings are scheduled for half an hour every second Friday but not always completed because of the busy schedules of the team members. Maria and her manager has made an 'agreement' about these meetings being conducted in Danish because the manager believes that the Danish colleagues are not 'themselves' when they are speaking their second language (Maria, interview, p. 5). Maria's manager is also a foreigner but she has learned Danish, and it therefore seems legitimate for her to suggest an 'agreement' like the one with Maria even though Maria does not subjectively regard herself as competent enough to actually participate in the meeting in Danish. The manager's point of view is that you learn more about your colleagues if you get to know them in their L1, and since Maria agrees with this argument and knows that some of her colleagues have trouble expressing themselves in English, she has agreed to this arrangement even though she herself is still using an L2.

In the think-a-loud, Maria explained that what she was doing while listening to the radio extract was similar to what she does when listening in other situations and she related this to the situation in the canteen, mentioned above:

I recognize also what I am doing, I am kind of memorizing the word, trying to understand, but then I skip what is happening afterwards because my brain needs to elaborate, so it's something that, maybe I told you once, that when I was going down to the canteen eh, my brain memorize it but didn't understand it, and only when I arrived and I saw what they said then I connected the two things

(Maria, think-a-loud, p.3)

Maria's way of 'elaborating' seems to mean using all the resources she has for making sense of the listening text and trying to use both the context and the words she understands. However, she also explains that she tries to listen for key words, but seems to use the term key words interchangeably with words she recognizes. This implies that for her key words are not necessarily the words most important to inferring meaning, but the words she knows. Maria generally had a hard time understanding the extracts in the think-a-loud at first, but she gradually understood a few words along the way, and in some cases, she was able to make guesses on the basis of her understanding of a few words. Maria's lack of understanding in the exercise is of course related to her low linguistic competence in Danish but probably also the fact that she has no prior experience with this radio program or maybe even similar programs. It seemed that she was not able to draw on much prior knowledge or experiences when trying to make sense of the extracts, and she explained that she only listened to music on the radio. Her lack of comprehension may, however, also be related to her strategy choices

and preferences for a bottom-up focus, which may not always be beneficial for comprehension, as described in Chapter 2.8 in line with Goh's (1997) and Haastrup's (2008) studies on comprehension.

In general, Maria's own descriptions of her language competence in Danish as well as what her recordings show indicate that her understanding of Danish is not automatized, and using CEFR's descriptors on listening comprehension in different listening situations, I would therefore place Maria's listening competence at an A2 level. This is in line with her own descriptions of "I understand something" from the (third) example above, the level she reached in Danish classes, and the fact that she understands what her interlocutors are saying when she is in the conversation from the beginning and knows or can somehow figure out the topic from either the context or single words (see Council of Europe, 2001, p. 66).

4.1.4 Additional comments from the member-checking session

Before Maria and I met up for the member-checking of my case portrait of her, she sent me an email saying, "It seems picturing me quite well." (Maria, e-mail, June 2015). Maria, therefore only had a few comments about the text, so we spent most of the time talking about what had happened since we last talked. She explained that she had changed position at IBM Denmark and was now in another all-Danish team, where a Danish colleague of hers insisted on speaking Danish to her in non-work-related situations. Maria was happy about this and in general experienced less frustration about Danish. She herself ascribed her negativity at the time of the data generation to her pregnancy and emotional state at the time. She now watched TV and read children's books with her son in Danish and had succeeded in participating in a Danish maternity group with him. In this group, one of the mothers had a low proficiency of English, which meant that Maria was forced to speak Danish with her. Maria explained that she generally found it much easier to speak Danish with people who did not speak English because they were more patient and made an effort, and the sum of all these experiences made her more confident about her Danish competence.

4.2 Pilar: ‘In the social part it’s Danish’

Pilar came to Denmark as an exchange student from Spain in the late 90s. She met her Danish husband, and they had their first child while living in Denmark. Her husband was studying at the university, and Pilar took Danish classes, but she stopped going to class after the first module because it was too time-consuming with the baby. The family moved to Spain because of Pilar’s new job, but they all moved back to Denmark around a decade later, and at the time of the data generation, Pilar was the mother of two and had been in the same position at IBM Denmark for five years. Pilar in general seems to regard language as a tool for communicating and creating and maintaining relations, and Danish a means of participating and integrating at work and in her everyday life. Her stories about learning and listening in Danish as an L2 are therefore primarily related to interacting efficiently and politely and rarely involve separating listening from speaking in work-related situations.

4.2.1 Investment in Danish

Pilar believes that learning the language of the country you live in is an important part of living a ‘normal’ life. Her husband is Danish, her son attends a Danish school, and her daughter a Danish kindergarten. Danish is therefore an inherent part of Pilar’s everyday life, and for Pilar, language is closely connected with culture. She believes that the differences between Danish and Spanish culture and language are one of the main reasons why she finds Danish difficult to learn:

- Pilar: I also think it [Danish] is not from the same root as Spanish, Italian and Portuguese. Danish is far away, for example you have the vowels sounds are difficult, I haven’t listened to them before
- Charlotte: Because it is different from Spanish
- Pilar: Yes it quite different. It is also because this is a language I knew just because I am married to my husband and I live in Denmark. But it is not a language you hear of, so you are not prepared for that someday you are going to learn Danish. You know English and hear French. You grow up in Spain, Denmark is a bit far away. You know Lars von Trier

(Pilar, interview, p. 15)

For Pilar, Denmark is in many ways different from Spain, and even though she enjoys living in Denmark, she misses a lot of things about Spain. Being and speaking Spanish generally

plays an important part in Pilar's self-concept. Speaking Spanish at home with her children is therefore also very important for her in order for her children to feel a connection with Spain, Spanish culture and Pilar's Spanish relatives, whom Pilar and her family visit for a month every summer. However, speaking Spanish at home is not only about the children learning it, but also about Pilar expressing herself the ways she wants. For her, language is a means of creating and maintaining relations, and using Spanish with the children feels more natural to her than Danish or English, even though she speaks English with her husband, and the children and her husband speak Danish with each other. Pilar's stories generally indicate that she has given her choice of language a lot of thought:

When I had my first kid I was asking. They said it is very important, language, because the communication is also a question of feelings. And you know when you say nice words in Danish for me it doesn't mean the same, you can say *min skat* [ENG: *my baby*] okay min skat no its not it's *mi carinito*, so you don't it's not, you cannot feel it in the same way

(Pilar, interview, p. 3)

Pilar's choice of Spanish at home has not been an easy choice, however. She knows that her Danish would become better if she used it more, and practicing at home with her husband and children would be an easy solution, but then her children would not learn Spanish:

Pilar: I have this thing that I want my kids to feel Spanish too. So I in a dilemma [laughs]

Charlotte: [laughs] yeah, I understand

Pilar: Yeah, because I want Danish, but at the same time, I know, I want them to know they are Spanish too. They are Danish and they are Spanish. So I want them to learn Spanish

(Pilar, interview, p. 2)

Pilar's dilemma between Danish and Spanish has been intensified by the fact that her son's schoolwork in Danish is now too difficult for her to help him with. This frustrates her, but she is busy at work, has two children and a husband, who also works a lot, so prioritizing Danish classes seems impossible. Also, for Pilar, learning has to be fun or relaxing and not feel like a "task to do" (Pilar, interview, p. 13). In fact, most of the Danish Pilar knows comes from everyday interactions and from watching TV and listening to the radio, and this "subliminal way" of learning (Pilar, interview, p. 7) is Pilar's preferred learning style. She has learned English by living in England for a year after university, and she remembers practicing by speaking English with British exchange students, who were living in Spain before she herself

went to England. Pilar wants to practice Danish in the same way, but she finds it difficult to make Danish friends because of a busier and more private culture in Denmark than she is used to from Spain.

Pilar, however, has one Danish friend with whom she practiced Danish when she first came to Denmark, but because the friend also speaks Spanish, they switched to Spanish at some point and never returned to Danish. The friend still often recommends Pilar Danish films and TV-shows to watch, and Pilar's husband helps her with translation or putting on subtitles. Pilar explained in the preliminary interview that she loves subtitles because "you are reading and then you can understand what is the context" (Pilar, interview, p. 10), but she also finds that all this help with understanding might be preventing her from learning.

Pilar mentioned several times throughout the data generation that people were often "very nice" about her lack of fluency in Danish, but sometimes 'being nice' means that her interlocutors switch to English when she tries in Danish. This, for example, happened when she tried to address the other parents at her son's school in Danish:

- Pilar: Ah, it's true, I speak Danish to the parent's kids too (...) but that's true, sometimes I talk with the parents and they change to English [laughs]. So they are very nice. They try to change to English. Yeah I think it's true, I have that situation quite a lot
- Charlotte: So you think it is nice that they try to switch?
- Pilar: I think it's nice because they try to be nice with me
- Charlotte: Yeah, but you think it is a bit annoying because you would rather speak Danish?
- Pilar: I think it's like an *espiral* [ENG: *spiral*]. I am not going to be better because, you know. When I try, people try to be nice, so they change in English. So perhaps I miss to have another level of Danish where it is more is *mas* [ENG: *more*] fluent

(Pilar, interview, p. 12)

Pilar's descriptions of herself and her learning preferences in general give the impression that she is extrovert and open when it comes to learning languages as her approach to learning both English and Danish shows. Furthermore, Pilar's point of view is that learning new things opens new doors, and knowing a bit of Danish also means understanding more of other Nordic languages as well as getting to know the Danes. In fact, the one module of Danish classes Pilar attended years ago turned out to be an unexpected advantage since it led her to the job she got in Spain:

Pilar: When I was in Spain I got my job thanks to Danish. Because they were looking for people that had been living in Denmark so they have a bit of knowledge of Danish, because we needed to create some informs, you know to create some addresses. And they couldn't find anyone that could speak Danish, so I applied and thanks to my Danish, you know, I got the job. So it's, and this is like I always say to my friends /

Charlotte: It was a good career choice [laughs]

Pilar: Yes! It's like I have a bachelor degree (...), I have a European master, you know I have a lot of things but it was Danish, because you always need to make a difference somehow [laughs]

(Pilar, interview, p. 1)

Pilar seems to try to make the most of the communicative resources available to her, whether they involve Danish, Spanish or English, and even though her *ideal self* (Dörnyei, 2009) wants to invest more in Danish, she has chosen to invest more in Spanish at home. Pilar therefore seems at peace with her language choices and investment in Danish, but because she is so aware of her own choices and preferences for language use, she also seems very aware of many Danes' preferences for using Danish with each other, and therefore also their preference for using English with her, as mentioned above. She because of this makes an effort to participate and integrate on the premises of her sociocultural surroundings, as the following section will show.

4.2.2 Language at work

About half of Pilar's self-recordings are from the office where she is working quietly in front of her computer. She sometimes has telephone calls in English, and Danish is more or less consistently spoken in the background. In the first recordings, Pilar's desk was placed in an open office with around 20 people, but in the last recordings, she had changed location, and from then on, shared an office with only two of her female colleagues from the previous office. Pilar mentioned in one of the recordings that one female colleague (Fc1) always spoke Danish to her, and they seemed to have a well-functioning agreement or routine of speaking Danish with each other, as the following extract shows (see English translation below):

Pilar: *Okay nu du kan snakke. Hej hej hvordan går det*

ENG: *Okay you can talk now. Hallo hallo how are you*

Fc1: *Jo tak det går rigtig fint* [laughs]

ENG: *I am very well thank you* [laughs]

Pilar: *Nårh ja, fordi jeg er i en research university research.*

ENG: *Well yes, because I am in a research university research*

Fc1: *Ja*

ENG: *Yes*

Pilar: *Det er fordi jeg er fra Spanien og jeg arbejder her i Danmark, IBM Denmark, så jeg skal jeg skal snakke med mennesker om, you know, min virksomheder, og de skal se hvornår jeg skal snakke dansk, hvornår skal jeg engelsk, for eksempel hvis jeg snakker med dig, hvornår du skifter på engelsk med mig. Så jeg skal vente? Så det er i orden? [laughs] Det er confidential*

ENG: *It is because I am from Spain and I work here in Denmark, IBM Denmark, so I have to talk to people about, you know, my companies, and they have to see when I have to speak Danish, when I have to speak English, for example if am talking to you, when you switch on English with me. So should I wait? So it is OK? [laughs] It is confidential*

(Pilar, day 1, rec. 4)

Pilar is able to manage a conversation as the one in this extract in Danish, and she explained in the interview that she mostly used Danish for social purposes at work, such as this one. Pilar's work, however, is more or less always done in English, because she has a global role at IBM Denmark, which means that she only has customers and clients outside Denmark. However, Pilar has what she calls "a social team" (Pilar, think-a-loud, p. 4), whom she shares an office with, goes to department meetings with and has lunch with, and these colleagues are all Danish. The following extracts show how Pilar herself explains her language use at work as primarily English for work-related interactions:

Pilar: *In a professional point of view my language is English, my official language is English. So Danish, you know, I can take lunch with some of them but it's not, you know, working working is English.*

Charlotte: *But when you go to lunch you speak Danish with your colleagues?*

Pilar: *Mm. Sometimes. Sometimes we speak English too [laughs],*

(Pilar, interview, p. 1)

And primarily Danish for 'social' interactions:

For example on Fridays there is this breakfast, so perhaps I can go to the breakfast thing, and they speak Danish all the time. So it's true, in the social part, it's Danish. In the social part, not professional, it's Danish. That's true, if you want to be integrate, it's true that you need to understand

(Pilar, interview, p. 2)

Pilar's examples also show, however, that even though English is her primary work language, she also sometimes participates in meetings in Danish, and conversely, as she mentioned in the extract above, English is also sometimes used at lunch. One meeting at IBM Denmark, for example, is always held in Danish, namely the quarterly department meeting, and Pilar described how she usually goes to these meetings but sometimes chooses only to participate in the parts of the meeting specifically relevant to her work. As the following extract indicates Pilar generally finds the department meetings difficult to understand, especially because she cannot ask for repetition and clarification along the way:

Pilar: It can be a department meeting where they have decided to be in Danish so I cannot ask. Sometimes I have work to do instead. Sometimes I go to a meeting for a while and hear the things that I think are most important for me. And I go back to work. Sometimes I would like to understand *det hele* [ENG: *everything*]...I remember I have been in meetings with people I know, I can ask them what did that mean, and sometimes they write an article after.

Charlotte: Okay so you have worked out some strategies for help for afterwards

Pilar: Yes. I go and say I think this important, do you mind. Sometimes, that's true, when there are too many people I don't dare to ask, or after I go and ask for example the person who gave the presentation and say I think I understood

(Pilar, think-a-loud, p. 3)

Pilar explained that presentation slides are usually in English, which makes it possible for her to follow, but she also makes sure to get the important information afterwards. Important aspects of the department meetings are, as Pilar explained, for example, usually described on the intranet afterwards, but Pilar also sometimes goes directly to the presenter for clarification. Pilar is, along with the other participants in the meeting, in a *listener role* as *auditor* (Rost, 2011) when she attends the department meeting, and this means that it is not appropriate to ask for clarification along the way. She is also, however, as along with the rest of the audience, expected to listen and understand the content of the meeting, and Pilar therefore makes sure she gets the help she needs in the form of visuals during the meeting, but also in different ways afterwards.

Pilar does not mind that the meetings are in Danish, however. In fact, she finds it natural that many things are in Danish, and that her Danish colleagues prefer speaking Danish with each other. She explains that she prefers to let her colleagues speak Danish as much as possible when the atmosphere is informal:

- Pilar: I think colleagues when they are Danish they speak Danish with each other. You know sometimes when you are sitting in a room you can listen that the way that they talk is in Danish. But sometimes I just go to the, for example they can have an informal meeting, and I just go there and they *skift* [ENG: *switch*] they change to English, and sometimes I try to follow in Danish and no no *jeg kan forstå* [ENG: *I understand*] and try I can try to be more integrate to that
- Charlotte: So you prefer that it is in Danish?
- Pilar: Yeah, I think so
- Charlotte: To practice or?
- Pilar: Ehm to practice, no. I don't know, because I also think that you know, in somehow you are in Denmark. So it's also, you know it's like, I understand that they want to speak the mother language, and then if I understand the Danish, why you know I am comfortable with that. And I understand sometimes, you know, they feel more comfortable speaking Danish, especially if they are on a break in a coffee break or something like that
- Charlotte: Okay so it's also for them to feel more comfortable
- Pilar: Yeah, you know I don't like that they have to change just because I am there, so I prefer to make the effort
- (Pilar, interview, p. 4)

Pilar's colleagues often switch to English out of consideration for her, but it is important for Pilar to show them that they do not always have to. She prefers trying in Danish as much as possible, and her recordings show that she often greets people in Danish and tries to use Danish to start with in most interactions.

In the following example, which involves what I would refer to as 'administrative work', that is, dealing with practical aspects of getting the work done, Pilar tries in Danish at first but quickly gets insecure about her Danish and therefore attempts a switch to English:

- Pilar: I have to pay for this
- Woman: *Nej nej IBM betaler*
- ENG: *No no IBM is paying*
- Pilar: Okay... Så jeg tror vi skal gå på engelsk nu. So I have to give back this?
- ENG: *Okay... I think we have to go to English now. So I have to give this back?*
- Woman: *Jamen altså du kan godt beholde den her, men vi skal aftale at du skal bestille en ny for du kan jo ikke bare beholde den her*
- ENG: *Well you can keep this one, but we have to agree that you order a new one because you cannot keep this one*
- Pilar: *Jeg ikke forstå hvad vil du sige for jeg er fra Spanien og jeg mit danske er ikke så godt*

ENG: *I not understand what you are trying to say because I am from Spain and my Danish is not that good*

Woman: *Ja. Ja ja okay. Taler du engelsk?*

ENG: *Yes. Yes yes okay. Do you speak English?*

Pilar: *Ja det tror jeg er bedre. For at jeg forstår det hele hvad du siger*

ENG: *Yes, I think that is better. So I understand everything what you are saying*

Woman: *Okay. We borrowed this phone to you in May*

(Pilar, day 1, rec. 3)

Before this interaction, Pilar had received a message about her phone, and she therefore goes to the phone administration where it turns out she had to return the phone she had borrowed and get a new one. Before the extract above, Pilar started out using Danish, but since it is important for her to understand the information she is getting about the phone, she encourages a switch to English. However, it seems that because she encouraged this switch in Danish and started the conversation in Danish, the woman at the phone administration does not immediately switch. The woman continues in Danish until Pilar more explicitly explains that she has difficulty understanding, and it seems to me that Pilar is sending mixed signals with her switching between English and Danish, which confuses her interlocutor. This may also be the case with other interlocutors, such as parents at her son's school, as previously mentioned, who may confuse her mix of English and Danish with a preference for English.

In a sense, the mixing works because Pilar can say whatever she wants by using all of her linguistic resources, but it sometimes happens fast and without warning or perhaps in an uncommon way, which makes her interlocutors confused. Furthermore, Pilar often speaks fast and uses Danish, Spanish and English in the same sentence, perhaps because she is used to all three languages being used interchangeably at home. This may however sometimes make it difficult to understand for people who do not know her, as the following example indicates:

Pilar: *You know I just spoke to the security guy. And it was in Danish. And he said I understand your Danish perfectly but you speak too fast [both laughing]*

Charlotte: *You do speak fast. In English too. But you probably do it in Spanish too*

Pilar: *Yes*

(Pilar, think-a-loud, p. 4)

It is obvious from Pilar's descriptions and recordings that she tries her best to be polite and considerate and therefore uses Danish as way of fitting in and "being integrate", as she herself calls it. However, she is also very aware of when the setting and content of an interaction requires a language choice of English, as will be described in the following section.

4.2.3 Experiences with listening

Pilar generally seems to have a clear understanding of language choice as dependent on whether the goal of the interaction is transactional or relational, in line with the dichotomies that other studies on interactions at the workplace refer to (e.g., Sandwall, 2013) as described in Chapter 2.3. Pilar understands that in interactions "on the social part" with more relational goals, her colleagues prefer using Danish in the same way as she herself prefers speaking Spanish at home. However, she defines meetings as having transactional goals where getting the message across is the most important thing, and the choice of English is therefore necessary for being efficient and precise. Pilar describes how she experiences meetings and lunch in the following extract:

- Pilar: At lunch I think it is more relaxed, because even you don't understand anything if you are at a meeting you cannot ask, what have you said? I don't understand this word. But at lunch it is more, social environment, so if you don't understand anything you can always ask someone, or, can you repeat again? Or, what did you say? You know you
- Charlotte: It's more okay
- Pilar: It's more okay for me to be... But in meetings you cannot say *kan du sige igen på dansk?* [ENG: *can you say again in Danish?*] You're in a meeting so
- Charlotte: Okay okay, yeah. So it's a more stressful
- Pilar: Yeah it can be more like *kan vi skifte på engelsk?* [ENG: *can we switch in English*] We just need to go to the focus. Our target is to understand this or, and then we continue
- (Pilar, think-a-loud, p. 3)

As Pilar explains, English is the obvious choice for meetings since everyone has to understand in order to do their job, and the principle of efficiency (see Chapter 2.3) therefore overrules other considerations. Pilar also indicates in the extract above, meetings are not the time and place to practice Danish even if she wants to because it would be a burden for the other participants and clash with the principle of efficiency.

By contrast, she considers lunch a more relaxed time and place to use and practice her Danish, as the following example shows:

- Pilar: If I am lunch and they speak in Danish sometimes I can be part of the conversation. But it's true, I can understand but if I want to express, perhaps I can try to say something in Danish and in English after, because I want to be sure they understand
- Charlotte: Ah okay so that can help, to say it twice? So it takes a long time?
- Pilar: Yes. Yes, but it's like you say before, it is so important that you have the interloc with the person that is talking to you, because there are people that are patient people that understand, and then there are people that don't have the patience or they, you know, perhaps they expect your level to be higher and then you feel, you know, maybe it's better if I don't talk that much Danish to that person

(Pilar, interview, p. 14-15)

The two previous examples show that Pilar is aware of how she participates in both meetings and at lunch without being in the way, and Pilar's strategies therefore seem dependent on the social circumstances. She seems to use strategies for clarification and repetition in Danish when possible, but switches to English when she found it necessary. She also explained in the interview that she is very aware of having different types of communication with different interlocutors, which was also obvious when I asked her whether she ever pretended to understand when someone spoke Danish to her:

- Pilar: I think it depends on the situation and the person that is asking me. If there is for example a manager here that is coming and he say something in Danish, and I have not understood a hundred per cent, I would say: *ja ja det er rigtigt fordi*, [ENG: *yeah yeah, that's true, because*] [laughs] because, perhaps for me it's a bit like: what have du said? Can you please repeat it? But it depends on the context, depends on the people. Because sometimes it's true, I smile and say, *ja ja for sure, ja for sikker, ja ja hundrede procent, ja ja* [ENG: *yeah yeah for sure, yeah yeah one hundred percent*] [laughs]
- Charlotte: Is that, can you think of any specific situations, do you think of anything typically. It's a manager for example?
- Pilar: Yes, for example with managers. They're speaking Danish to you, and perhaps you feel a bit like, you know, oh my goodness perhaps he expect that my Danish is really good, and perhaps, you know, it's true I'm a bit shy and I say, perhaps I am going to speak Danish and he doesn't understand me or I don't understand him well

(Pilar, interview, p. 11-12)

In this example, Pilar describes a power relation between employees and their managers, which may influence language choice. She admits to being more focused on not losing face in

front of a manager than when interacting with her colleagues from the office, and she therefore refers to making use of a strategy of *faking comprehension* if she feels the need to (see Vandergrift, 2012). Pilar generally seems highly focused on fitting in and not being noticed and categorized because of her ‘foreignness’, and her strategies for coping with L2 listening situations in Danish are therefore often social strategies for participating in communication as unproblematically as possible rather than strategies for dealing with learning and understanding Danish as such.

However, in the think-a-loud, Pilar reported using strategies for dealing with the specific listening text, such as making use of her previous knowledge and listening for key words to infer meaning, in line with Haastrup’s (1989) cues of understanding. When listening to the first radio extract, Pilar more or less repeated all of what was said, and I therefore asked her whether she found it easy:

Easy, I don’t know. At least it was not difficult, but I think it was unconsciously.
Hjemmeside [ENG: *Homepage*]. Facebook. *Sådan noget, velkommen* [ENG: *things like that, welcome*]. So there were some key words and more or less I can figure out

(Pilar, think-a-loud, p. 1)

The fact that Pilar is automatically able to understand what was said in this radio extract combined with her comprehension in the recordings shown in the previous section means that I would place her listening level in Danish at a B1 according to the CEFR descriptors. She is able to understand main points in conversations with familiar topics in most situations, and she is able to identify general messages and specific details when people speak clearly. However, she has difficulty with the rest of the radio extracts and her recordings similarly show that she switches to English when the interactions goes beyond more general matters such as in the interaction with the woman at the phone office. In addition, the first radio extract which Pilar said she understood in the extract above was the host introducing the program, which seems to make this extract much easier to understand than the following ones.

When listening to the second radio extract, Pilar was only able to understand a few words in total, but she explained that she tried to make use of her knowledge of the world and different kinds of listening texts on the radio to make guesses about the overall context of the text:

Pilar: I think it is some kind of discussion xxx. I pick up some words but I don’t know the context so for me it would help if I could see some image. I don’t know what they are talking about. Something about

voksen or gammel [ENG: *adult or old*]. I think it's like an opinion. Something like they are giving their opinion. It's like a debate, but I don't know what they are discussing about

Charlotte: So did you do like you did last time, listen for specific words?

Pilar: Yes keywords, but there are some words that I keep it in my like *nybeny* [COM: trying to imitate sounds she heard] so if I listen it again I will tell you, but I don't know the meaning. So perhaps I will go to the dictionary and it happen sometimes, and I say to my son, okay, what is the meaning of this word, because I keep the word, but I don't know the meaning

Charlotte: You hear a word and you know it's a word?

Pilar: Yes yes, I hear it, you hear it again I will tell you, there is like two or three words that I have understood but I don't know the meaning

(Pilar, think-a-loud, p. 1-2)

Pilar was able to guess that the radio program was some kind of debate because there were more people talking at once, which made understanding the specific words less feasible. She explained trying to listen for key words to guess what the debate was about, but she was not able to make sense of it because she did not understand the words she heard. She was however able to point out words she perceived but which she did not understand. This shows that her processing of linguistic input in Danish is not entirely fluent because she lacks vocabulary knowledge in some situations but it also shows that she has an awareness of word separation in Danish.

Pilar's experience of the third radio extract seemed to be more or less the same as the previous one, but she identified this extract as a possible interview because only two people were talking. This again shows how Pilar tries to use constructive strategies for coping with the listening text by using her knowledge of different listening texts on the radio. Pilar also related her experiences with listening in the think-a-loud with other situations by referring to what she generally finds difficult about Danish:

Pilar: So yeah it's true what you read is completely different from what you say, so, yeah, it's like you need to have this preparation with the ear to understand

Charlotte: And how can you get that

Pilar: I think just listening, listening, listening. I think when you listen a lot, and you get to the word, and sometimes it's the context you don't understand, but then you understand the concept

(Pilar, interview, p. 13)

Pilar seems to find it difficult to understand Danish because she cannot make sense of a listening text quickly enough to follow. She therefore, in relation to the extract above, described that having access to a transcribed version of the text helps her and that practicing listen in general is necessary to becoming better at catching specific words or the topic of a listening text. Pilar thus refers to understanding as dependent on both the single words and the overall context similar to bottom-up and top-down processing. Pilar's intermediate listening level of Danish means that she is able to listen in Danish in many different situations, but she also admits to getting very tired after listening in Danish for a whole evening with her husband's Danish family or at the department meetings. Pilar therefore prefers English when she is tired, but likes to practice Danish in an informal relaxing atmosphere that allows her time to ask for clarification and repeat herself when necessary. Furthermore, she tries to make use of the possible communicative situations she has in Danish to practice and to create relations. However, she often finds that there is no time to actually focus on learning, which means that Pilar does not progress as much as she would perhaps have liked to.

4.2.4 Additional comments from the member-checking session

Pilar was very busy at the time of the member-checking session and had not read the text before we met up. We therefore went through it together while having coffee. Pilar generally liked the content but had many minor comments about the text. She found the analysis of her mix and switch of languages useful but explained that she rarely mixed languages when speaking Spanish and English because she felt more confident when using those two languages, whereas Danish sometimes made her insecure. She was surprised, however, that I found that she spoke fast and claimed that many people from Spain spoke much faster than her. Like at the time of the main data generation, she expressed a pragmatic as well as cultural view on language, identifying English as a necessity for including foreigners at work and for working with people in other countries, but Danish as a natural choice of communication in Denmark. She therefore found language use at work unproblematic because the language choices were made on the basis of the participants as well as genre. We concluded the session by agreeing that we would only speak Danish if we met up again because Pilar wanted to practice and show that she could easily carry out a conversation in Danish.

4.3 Robert: ‘I at least understand’

Robert from South Africa worked in a technical role at IBM Denmark. Before moving to Denmark, Robert and his family had been living in England for around a decade until Robert was offered a new position at IBM. Robert attended Danish classes for 18 months when he first arrived and passed two levels before quitting because of lack of time. He had just had his second son, was busy at work, and he had never really intended to pass all five levels of the state-funded Danish courses since, for example, being able to write in Danish was not important to him. At the time of the data generation, Robert used Danish every day at work for listening but found speaking difficult. Robert therefore represents an interesting case of a learner who is able to separate listening and speaking skills for different purposes.

4.3.1 Investment in Danish

Robert grew up in South Africa with an Afrikaans-speaking mother and an English-speaking father and his description of his English grandparents, who moved to South Africa and never learned Afrikaans, is important to understanding his investment in Danish:

I really want to be comfortable in Danish. My grandparents were originally from England and moved to South Africa in 1948, and after living there for more than 50 years they still couldn't speak Afrikaans. My father married an Afrikaans girl and I found it strange that my grandparents couldn't read, write or understand anything in Afrikaans, they only spoke English and I just thought there was something wrong with that picture. So, I don't want to be living in this country for 50 years and not be able to speak, read and write in Danish

(Robert, post interview, p. 13)

Robert does not want to repeat his grandparents' mistakes, so his concept of his *ideal self* (Dörnyei, 2009) involves learning and using Danish. His story of his grandparents therefore seems to be an example of his *feared self* (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Furthermore, Robert finds that learning the local language is a necessity for settling in in a new place, and that learning the language is “the quickest way that you can actually integrate” (Robert, interview, p. 11).

Integrating in the local society is especially important for Robert and his wife because of their children, for whom they want to create the best opportunities for communicating with everyone around them. At home, Robert speaks English with his children, and his wife speaks

Afrikaans with them, in order for the children to be able to communicate with the entire family in South Africa. The children attend the local Danish school and kindergarten, and, at the time of the data generation, they often spoke Danish to each other. Robert expressed that he actually hoped that their use of Danish at some point could improve “*fars dårlige dansk*” (ENG: *Dad’s bad Danish*) (Robert, interview, p. 6). However, the children had so far refused to speak Danish with their father because they find it too strange.

Robert has tried living in different countries, and he finds it a matter of perspective on life whether you chose to isolate yourself and feel like a foreigner or try to fit in. Being from South Africa, which is a linguistically very diverse country, seems to influence Robert’s beliefs about learning the local language used around him. However, even though Robert grew up with Afrikaans as his L2, he did not learn to speak it fluently before he met his Afrikaans wife. Robert would practice Afrikaans with his wife, and she would correct him, and after two to three years, his Afrikaans was brought up to a high level. This safe way of practicing often and persistently with the same person helped Robert progress, but he feels that he lacks the opportunity to do the same in Danish.

Robert is generally very critical of himself as a learner, especially when it comes to speaking Danish, and it is clear from his stories that he finds his wife’s strategies for learning Danish much more efficient than his own. He often, throughout the data generation, referred to things his wife had experienced during her language learning process, and it was clear that he admired her approach and found her to be an example of a *good language learner* (e.g., Rubin, 1975, see Chapter 2.2.3). Robert therefore finds that he could benefit from using some of her techniques to progress:

Charlotte: *Så hvad synes du, du kunne gøre bedre?*

ENG: *So what do you think you could do better?*

Robert: I think I could read more. Then another thing when I am listening, now that I’ve reached the point where I am able to distinguish between words, my ears are now a little more tuned in to Danish. So, I can hear a word and I go, okay, what is that word? What I should do is just make a note of that word and then go and look it up. What my wife did, and I think it’s a great technique, whenever she learned a new word she would try and use it in a sentence as soon as possible. In that way she was better able to remember its meaning. I think there are a number of things that I could do but, arghh, it requires discipline and I need to prioritize it

(Robert, interview, p. 4)

Robert is certain that his wife's approach to learning Danish has been beneficial, and he mentions that "either she has a gift for languages or it is just her *vilje* [ENG: *will power*]. It has paid off for sure" (Robert, rec. 2, day 1). Robert's wife chose to speak as much Danish as possible from the beginning of her learning process both in and outside the language school, and she refused to switch to English even if her interlocutors tried to. However, even though Robert considers his wife's approach to learning productive, he finds himself unable to be as open, extrovert and persistent when it comes to practicing his Danish in interaction as his wife has been, and he prefers learning in everyday life by, for example, listening to the radio.

Robert regards his Danish sufficient for communicating in everyday situations, such as the supermarket, and he is pleased that he can pick up on Danish humor and take care of smaller everyday things in Danish. As he says:

By nature I'm quite a sarcastic person [laughs] so I do get the sarcasm and the irony and I enjoy that part of it. It's not always easy to understand Danish humor as it is very subtle and a lot depends on how you express something or the way that you say it or the tone you use. What I find these days is I am much better now at doing simple things like phoning the telephone company or phoning my bank or phoning the car service dealer, which I do in Danish, mainly because they are relatively simple tasks and things to do but you have to start somewhere

(Robert, interview, p. 5)

Robert's level is also high enough to follow everything I said in Danish throughout the data generation, during which I consistently spoke Danish, and he English. He only occasionally said one or two words in Danish to make a point. As he explains, he wants to be able to speak more Danish but finds that he is "not the fastest learner" (Robert, observation, rec. 1), and that he, as many others, often has a tendency to take the easy way out and use English because it is the less demanding but also the most efficient way of communicating. Robert also mentions that he is not very "brave" when it comes to practicing speaking and he tends "to want to have 'perfect' pronunciation before trying to speak" (Robert, e-mail, June 2012). He finds that what sounds fine in his head sounds all wrong when it comes out, so he is often reluctant to try.

Robert generally considers Danish a difficult language to learn and ascribes this particularly to the lack of consistency between written and spoken Danish, as the following example indicates:

Charlotte: *Tror du dansk er sværere at lære end andre sprog?*

ENG: Do you think Danish is more difficult to learn than other languages?
Robert: Absolutely. Not so much for reading, but certainly from the point of view of listening, and understanding how things are pronounced when speaking. Just being able to make the pronunciation I think it is very very difficult. If you look at other languages, such as, I don't know, Spanish, or even German, pretty much what you read is the way you pronounce it

(Robert, interview, p. 10)

While Robert's vocabulary helps him with reading in Danish, it does not help with speaking and listening. He also describes the Danish grammar as similar to that of Afrikaans, but he finds grammar difficult and unhelpful when it came to learning languages. Robert thus seems to suggest that people have different learning styles and goals with their language learning, and if the point is being able to communicate in Danish, then grammar was perhaps not that important.

Robert's stories about himself seem to suggest a view of himself as more of an introvert, and a learner who needs a safe space to practice and who often prefers learning on his own. Robert, however, had a lot to say when I interviewed him, which shows that 'being introvert' is not a stable personality factor but context-dependent (and perhaps language-dependent), in line with Norton and Toohey's (2001) discussion of good language learners (see Chapter 2.2.3). Robert obviously finds it much more face-threatening to speak Danish than to listen in Danish, but he also seems to have a functional approach to his language learning of Danish. It therefore seems to make much more sense for him to spend his energy on listening in Danish in professional settings, where there is a purpose with listening, than in 'social' settings at lunch, as I will discuss in the next section.

4.3.2 Language at work

As mentioned, Robert rarely speaks Danish at work, but he often listens, and in the email he sent me when signing up for the study he explained his language use at work as follows:

All our team meetings etc. are conducted in Danish. My colleagues do not speak English just because I am around, or for my benefit. When speaking directly to me some will still speak in English, however some still persevere with speaking Danish to me (which I prefer). My meetings with IBM customers get done in Danish, which is fine because I find it relatively easy to follow an 'IT' discussion in Danish

(Robert, e-mail, June 2012)

The corporate language at IBM is English, but Robert finds that it depends a lot on the specific department and team how much Danish is used. Robert's desk is placed in an open office where he sat close to his team, and since most of his colleagues are Danes, a lot of Danish is spoken around him. Robert explained in the post interview that he easily understands simple questions and conversations at the office, but when people are being funny or say something out of context, he has trouble understanding:

Most of the time I find that, it's in the beginning that it's very easy to pick up what somebody is asking and to respond, but then what I find as the conversation goes along it gets more and more tricky to follow as it gets more in-depth

(Robert, post interview, p. 10).

Robert also explained that the few times he actually replies in Danish, it happens automatically, but he does not want to spend time thinking about how to say things in Danish, so he quickly switches to English when he does not know immediately how to construct a sentence, as the following example shows:

Fc3: *Hvordan gik det med dit projekt der, det der eksperiment du er med i*

ENG: How did it go with you project, that experiment you are in

Robert: It's continuing

Fc3: *Er det sjovt?*

ENG: *Is it fun?*

Robert: Ja det er sjovt... <But it hasn't improved my Danish>

ENG: *Yeah it's fun...* <but it hasn't improved my Danish>

Fc3: *<Er det underligt?> Du taler altså ret godt dansk*

ENG: *<Is it weird?> Your Danish is really good*

Robert: Hvad siger du?

ENG: What was that?

Fc3: *Du taler altså ret godt dansk*

ENG: *Your Danish is already really good*

Robert: *Nåhr*

ENG: *Oh*

(Robert, day 1, rec. 4)

The same female colleague introduces Robert at a meeting in another recording by saying: "Robert is South African but he speaks very well Danish" (Robert, day 2, rec. 6). Robert

dismisses this in Danish and continues in English, explaining that the presentation will be in English, but that he is able to understand if they speak Danish. This way of attending meetings by listening in Danish but speaking English is quite common for him, as he explained in the preliminary interview:

Charlotte: *Ja du skriver, at du ret tit holder møder på dansk for eksempel*

ENG: *Yeah you write that you quite often have meetings in Danish for example*

Robert: Yeah [laughs] phew that's interesting. Both team meetings within IBM, and then also with customer meetings. It's relatively easy to follow an IT discussion in Danish because I've heard it so many times, so I pretty much know more or less what the customer is aiming for with the questions

Charlotte: *Så du svarer også på dansk*

ENG: *So you also reply in Danish*

Robert: No. What we normally do is that I will introduce myself in Danish and say my Danish is at a point where I understand but to answer in Danish is too difficult, and that I am quite ok if the whole meeting is in Danish, and if I am unsure about something I will ask. I like to believe that I get 90% of what is said but there are times that I have misunderstood something

Charlotte: *Ja det skrev du også. Er der nogen sådan specifikke eksempler på det?*

ENG: *Yeah you wrote that too. Are there any sort of specific examples of that?*

Robert: No not specifically that I can remember. But it will be maybe the finer description of a particular system that I thought I understood, but there will be one or two parts of it that I didn't get. So what I'll do is, I'll do a walk through with the sales guy typically, because I'm in a technical role, to make sure that I understood everything that was said and there wasn't anything key that I missed

(Robert, interview, p. 1)

In this example, Robert describes concrete and fruitful strategies for listening in a meeting situation and points out that he generally finds understanding in meetings pretty easy. The meetings usually have an agenda, and the structure and language are more or less the same each time, and because Robert works with IT, many of the words are the same in Danish and English. Robert also explained that he relies on his colleagues to tell him if there is something important he needs to attend to and to press him "for an answer in the meeting" (Robert, post interview, p. 7). It seems that Robert is generally considered a *legitimate listener* (see Chapter 2.2.4) in Danish, which means that he has gained enough credibility and recognition for being competent in understanding spoken Danish even though he does not speak it. This credibility

is partly gained *in* the meetings by Robert's way of presenting himself and showing comprehension along the way by either clarifying, replying or commenting, but his position as a legitimate listener in Danish is also achieved *before* the meeting and over time because he has shown his colleagues that he understands what has said in the meetings in Danish by acting upon it. He also makes use of strategies after the meeting. He, for example, goes through the content with a colleague, which also adds to his credibility as a legitimate listener in Danish even though he rarely speaks Danish. This shows how a specific social situation is influenced by context *brought along* and *brought about* (Bremer et al., 1996, see Chapter 2.2.4).

Robert mentions that when he is listening in a meeting, he is usually familiar with the topic and he refers to hearing "the same type of questions being made quite often" (Robert, post interview, p. 8), whereas listening on more 'social' occasions was more difficult because he cannot prepare for the content:

Charlotte: *Okay hvad så når I går over til noget mere socialt, når der er frokost eller*

ENG: *Okay then what about when you start doing something more social, when there is lunch or*

Robert: Yeah that's tricky. So all my colleagues, by now there is no mercy, they just carry on in Danish ([laughs]). There are lots of times when I can pick up if they are talking about summer holiday, or talking about something that's been very topical, as in something that's been on the news. But then sometimes I'm just totally lost, and then I switch off and I carry on with lunch until I am specifically asked something.

Charlotte: *Okay så du holder faktisk op med at høre efter*

ENG: *Okay so you actually stop listening*

Robert: Yes if I am too confused, too far off, then I switch off [laughs]

Charlotte: *Okay, så du synes faktisk det er sværere til frokost end til møderne*

ENG: *Okay, so you actually think it is more difficult at lunch than at meetings*

Robert: Oh yeah, absolutely. Because in a work environment there is a lot of English in Danish technical speak

Charlotte: *Ja specielt når det handler om computere*

ENG: *Yeah especially when it is about computers*

Robert: Especially computers and the like. So I have found that it is easier then, but there are no set categories when you are having a social discussion. It can go anywhere from politics to the latest car you've bought to whatever, and then what I often find myself doing is, I'll be following along and then there's one or two words that are said and I'm trying to think about what they are in English and by that stage the conversation has moved on, and then I've got to come back and

I've lost a whole lot and then it's too much to try and catch up
(Robert, interview, p. 1-2)

Robert goes to lunch with his Danish colleagues almost every day, but he experiences that they often switch to English when he is around, or when he replies in English. He prefers that they speak Danish, but he also understands that they are not always that patient with him since he finds the 'social' conversations hard to follow and therefore rarely participates actively. Robert therefore describes his comprehension and language level as dependent on the different skills but also on different situations:

I would like to think that if it was just a social conversation, that I understand about sixty to seventy per cent depending on what's being discussed (...) and in a business environment it's probably slightly higher, about 80.

(Robert, interview, p. 5)

Robert generally finds it difficult to participate for a long time in Danish at lunch, and this means that he sometimes keeps very quiet, but he also explained he prefers not talking that much sometimes, as the example below indicates.

Robert only made two recordings of lunch during the data generation, and in one of them he is having lunch with only one colleague, and they both speak English during the entire lunch. In the other recording of lunch from the day I observed him at work, he spoke to me in English almost exclusively. My participation led to a few smaller interactions with his colleagues about the study and the recordings, but after this Robert was quiet until we left, and at the end of the day, he told me that this was how he usually participates at lunch:

Charlotte: *Er det her en typisk dag*

ENG: *Is this a typical day*

Robert: Yes pretty much. Much of what I do here, I could have done at home but for the little one and my wife. So I'll come in and attend to emails (...) Lunch is pretty much at the same time, and today is typical in that I do not participate in the conversation too much. When I ask something in English they switch to English and then after a while they switch back to Danish. So I typically won't engage if I don't have anything really important to say. I like to listen. When the listening gets too much I usually switch off and go back to my desk

Charlotte: *Hvis nu samtalen var på engelsk ville du så være blevet længere?*

ENG: *If the conversation had been in English would you have stayed longer?*

Robert: Most probably not

Charlotte: *Du ville måske have deltaget mere?*

ENG: *Perhaps you would have participated more?*

Robert: I don't know if I would. Only if I have something to contribute with. It's not that I don't like my colleagues. It's just how I usually approach life, if I don't have anything important to contribute with, I normally just keep quiet [laughs]

(Robert, observation, rec. 1)

As Robert points out, he often prefers to keep quiet if he has nothing important to say, and he even mentions that his wife wants him to talk more about his day when he comes home from work, but he often forgets to share things that he does not find important to tell. He calls this “unfair” to his wife (Robert, observation, rec. 1), but he also mentions this as a fact about his personality and as an explanation about not participating that much at lunch. As he says:

Robert: There are times when I do switch off

Charlotte: *Mm er det fordi du bliver træt eller*

ENG: *Mm is that because you get tired or*

Robert: Yes it's just [imitates snoring] ([laughs]). Sometimes it's just too much to keep going, but it's something I've struggled with since childhood. I tend to be a dreamer. I go off into my own space ([laughs]) so it's not just about the language

(Robert, interview, p. 14)

Robert also explained that listening to Danish for a long time, whether at lunch or at meetings is tiring for him, because it still required a lot of conscious attention as a result of his language not yet being fully automatized, as will be further described in the following section. However, when to participate at work in Danish is also sometimes a choice and a preference for Robert about when to spend mental energy on understanding or not, and it seems that Robert has a functional approach to language and participation, as also mentioned above. This means that, when it is needed, he uses Danish, and he carefully listens and chooses to spend energy on processing, but he is also aware of his limitations and knows that he needs to recharge, and that it is not possible for him to participate in Danish for an entire day.

4.3.3 Experiences with listening

As mentioned, Robert's understanding of Danish is dependent on the specific situation, and even though he generally finds attending meetings in Danish easier than participating in ‘social’ conversations, some meetings are much easier attending than others. While recording,

Robert participated in two very different meetings (but only recorded one). One was a big employee meeting where four different talks were given on the status of the company, and three out of four of these talks were in Danish. The other was a small customer meeting with 5-6 people. Robert explained that the small customer meeting was much easier to understand than the department meeting because it was about a subject that he was very familiar with. However, he left the customer meeting “feeling mentally very tired” because he was “concentrating the whole time trying to follow along” (Robert, post interview, p. 5). Robert generally finds that he constantly has to stay focused in smaller meetings in order to ask people to repeat when needed, and that asking for comprehension help in a meeting is not always that easy:

I do get into a slight panic, when in a business meeting, there are things I do not understand and I have to interrupt and then go back to a point. I find it awkward as it disrupts the flow of the meeting

(Robert, interview, p. 4)

Robert does not want to slow down the meetings, and he finds it difficult to ask for clarification, which seems related to his role in these smaller meetings as the expert. Robert therefore has very thorough ways of going through the meetings, as explained above in 4.3.2, which is probably more than most Danish colleagues do even though they may also lose concentration during a meeting.

Robert also explained that he found the large company meeting very difficult to follow. The manager, who was presenting, spoke “very fast and he wasn’t wearing a microphone or a speaker and his voice was very low” (Robert, post interview, p. 3), and even though the manager used charts on his slides, which made it easier for Robert to follow the presentation, the individual cases that were presented along with the charts were difficult to understand. Robert felt that he was less prepared for the content in the department meeting, and because there were more speakers who were presenting from far away and often more things going on at the same time, Robert found that he was unable to understand the details of the different presentations. However, it seemed that he was able to repeat a lot of what was said at the meeting, and when I confronted him about this, he explained that “it is about context because it’s not an uncommon story” (Robert, post interview, p. 4). With this comment, Robert seems to be indicating that listening in department meetings similar to the smaller meetings he attended has a repetitive character in form and content, and that this helps his comprehension.

However, because he is not in a listener role where he was expected to reply in the department meeting, his concentration and attention drops. At the same time, not having to participate also makes it much easier to relax and sometimes switch off.

Robert also explained that he often tries to use visuals when listening to get clues about what is going on, but he also sometimes consciously decides not to attend to visuals when listening because it confuses him. This, for example, happens when he listens to a presentation, such as the one at the department meeting, where he is looking at the slides for the presentations while listening at the same time. As mentioned (see Chapter 4.2.2), the slides at meetings in at IBM Denmark are usually in English because they are saved as minutes, but the talks may sometimes be in Danish. Robert finds that it helps him understand if the slides are in Danish, so the text on the slides follow the presenter's words. Oppositely, he has a tendency to stop listening and only follow the slides if they do not match the oral text that goes along with them. The slides are useful for finding out what the topic is, but when Robert is reading, he is not listening. He even mentions that he sometimes makes a "conscious decision to switch off and then focus on the slides and then catch all the content before it moves on" (Robert, post interview, p. 4).

Furthermore, Robert points out that it does not help him to be able to see the person he is listening to, opposite of most other learners, because he finds it difficult to focus on both looking and listening at the same time:

Charlotte: *Hvad med når du er i en mødesituation eller til frokost? Hjælper det dig så at du kan se personen der snakker?*

ENG: *What about when you are in a meeting situation or at lunch? Does it help you if you can see the person who is talking?*

Robert: No ([laughs]) it doesn't help me

Charlotte: *Så telefon er faktisk lige så nemt*

ENG: *So telephone is actually just as easy*

Robert: Yes, it's the same. Even when I am looking at somebody I am not looking at them I am listening so I find visually it's more of a distraction for me to focus on someone and then try and understand

Charlotte: *Så du lukker øjnene når du lytter*

ENG: *So you close your eyes when you listen*

Robert: Sometimes, but even now I am looking at the wall when you are talking because I am thinking all the time

(Robert, interview, p. 13)

Even though Robert listens to Danish at work every day, he still has to focus when trying to understand Danish, and this makes him tired. When listening to an English presentation, Robert finds that he is at the same time able to work on his laptop and tune in and out of the presentation when he finds something relevant and interesting. Oppositely, when listening in Danish he finds himself unable to tune in and out in the same way because he cannot process the listening text quickly enough. This means that his concentration often drops “after 10-15 minutes” (Robert, post interview, p. 4), which makes listening to presentations where he does not have to participate mentally tiresome.

The think-a-loud exercise also shows that Robert is not able to process at the demanded speed, but also that he is used to listening in Danish and has good strategies for inferring meaning. After listening to the first extract, Robert mentioned a couple of words he thought he heard, but he felt unsure of the overall content. He explained that he used the words he recognized to try to guess the topic and the type of conversation he was listening to. He went on explaining that he used his knowledge of different kinds of radio programs but also the tone of voice and expressions of the speakers to guess what the situation is. For example, he described finding commercials and humor specifically difficult to understand (Robert, think-a-loud, p. 2).

After the third extract, Robert admitted that he had missed the first part of what was said and only picked up the second part. This, according to Goh (1997), is a common listening problem when the language is not fully automatized, but in this case it also seems related to the specific situation and the lack of co-text in the think-a-loud session. Robert showed how he used his background knowledge to guess the context of the extract by focusing on the way the presenter was speaking, the words he recognized and thinking about what he knew about radio programs. After the last extract, I asked him whether he listened for something specific, and he explained that he tried to catch whatever he could make sense of, and that he was usually able to guess the context from a few words:

Whatever word comes along or that I recognize, but there were one or two words that once again I got. I sort of recognized four words out of the sentence and then there was one word, and I was thinking, what was that, what was that? And then I think I sort of followed

(Robert, think-a-loud, p. 6)

Robert is obviously good at guessing, and he also seems good at accepting that there are words he does not understand. He is not afraid of trying to infer meaning from a listening text even though he does not understand all the individual words and details, and he tries to catch words he recognizes while using all of his knowledge of the world to infer meaning. In this way he is making use of both bottom-up and top-down processing, which is a beneficial way of listening.

Robert also seems to be making use of both types of processing when listening to the radio while driving to work in the morning. He explained that he uses what he hears on the radio as conversation topics with his colleagues as a way of checking his comprehension, and that he enjoys this way of listening for learning. It also works well for him to listen in the morning because his energy to practice Danish drops during the day. This again shows how Robert seemed to constantly be balancing his mental energy:

I am still making conscious efforts to read and listen more. But after a long day of just listening to Danish it's tiring, and my head's going around and it's a bit difficult. I am much better first thing in the morning, so I enjoy listening to the news. Then I'll come into the office and I'll ask questions about what I've heard. I'll say, oh I've heard this on the radio, something about this and this and this, did I understand it correctly. And then, yeah yeah yeah, hot topic. But generally speaking, come the afternoon evening, phew, then I am tired

(Robert, think-a-loud, p. 1)

Robert usually listens to the Danish public service station P1, and he often finds it interesting to listen “from the point of view of just trying to figure out what they were saying (Robert, think-a-loud, p. 1) and not so much for learning or hearing about the topic. Robert explained that what he tries to do when listening to the radio is to search for the words that he knows but also to focus on the interviewer's questions in order to guess the topic, and this again shows use of both bottom-up and top-down strategies. When listening in customer meetings, Robert primarily indicates using top-down listening because he knows the setting and the frame for guessing the specific words that come along. By contrast, at lunch he seems to try to catch specific words and figure out the content but without a frame to connect it with, and he therefore primarily makes use of bottom-up processes here. Robert's comprehension therefore clearly depends on the context, as he himself explained, as well as his role in the situation and his knowledge about the topic. Robert is therefore a good example of how listening

comprehension is both context and content dependent, and how much experience and routines influence level in a specific setting.

4.3.4 Additional comments from the member-checking session

Before meeting up for the member-checking session, Robert sent me his initial thoughts by email and wrote, among other things: “A very interesting read (...) never thought of myself as a Robert, but I like it.” (Robert, e-mail, June 2015). Robert’s comments therefore only concerned the transcriptions. He found the examples difficult to read but also thought that they presented him poorly, and we therefore agreed that he could go through them himself making them more similar to written language. He completely agreed with my descriptions of him and his listening, and found that his level of understanding was certainly increasing, adding that there was still a chance that he would not turn into his grandparents. However, he was a bit worried about not being able to use his Danish so much from next summer because he had been offered a new Nordic role where all meetings were in English. He was therefore already starting to do more reading of Danish newspapers and articles and looking up words he did not know in his dictionary app. He still found that his Danish had to gradually develop on its own without him attending classes, and he therefore expressed a need to stay focused.

4.4 Tomasz: ‘Understanding is not my biggest problem’

Tomasz came to Denmark from Poland to study on an exchange program for engineers six years before the data generation. He was supposed to stay for six months but got a student job at IBM and decided to stay in Denmark. The job did not have any language requirements, but Tomasz felt that in order to get full-time employed, he had to learn Danish. Tomasz therefore started Danish classes after three years in Denmark, and at the time of the data generation, he used Danish every day at work. He generally experienced more problems with speaking and pronunciation than with listening, and the portrait of Tomasz therefore shows an international employee with a high (listening) proficiency in Danish and fruitful strategies for dealing with different listening situations at work. Since all the data related to Tomasz was in Danish, all the examples in the following portrait have been translated into English and numerated. All of the original transcriptions of the examples used can be seen in Danish in Appendix E.

4.4.1 Investment in Danish

Tomasz wanted to participate in the study to become better at Danish but also because he wanted to help facilitate new research and teaching in Danish as an L2. He told me that he had recently been interviewed by an former colleague of mine for another project related to language learning, and this made it clear to me that he found the topic important and that he was ambitious about his language learning. Tomasz persistently used Danish every day at work and had asked for more Danish classes to improve his pronunciation, which he found caused him more trouble than comprehension. He remembered having more trouble with understanding Danish but now felt fully capable of handling the few comprehension problems he experienced at work. Tomasz seemed very aware of his strengths and limitations regarding language learning, and at the end of the study, Tomasz asked me to evaluate his Danish and assess whether his recordings were useful. At the time, I was unsure about using his data because he to me seemed fluent in Danish, and I therefore questioned his participation in the study in the post interview:

Ex. 1:

Charlotte: *When you wrote me you knew this project was about understanding*

Tomasz: *Yes*

Charlotte: *So what did you think about understanding*

- Tomasz: *I think it is getting better and better but it is still a problem. Sometimes there is a problem and then I can't*
- Charlotte: *So when you signed up you thought, you still experienced problems sometimes*
- Tomasz: *Yes*
- Charlotte: *Okay so you were in that category*
- COM: Referring to the categories described in the IBM presentation of who were relevant participants for the study (see Chapter 3.2.2)
- Tomasz: *Yes*
- Charlotte: *But when we talked the first time you said understanding wasn't your biggest problem*
- Tomasz: *Yes and I would still say that it is not the biggest problem for me because I think the writing and pronunciation are bigger problem*
- (Tomasz, post Interview, p. 8)

Upon evaluation of Tomasz' proficiency in Danish, I remember thinking, and also telling him, that I did not find his pronunciation to be a problem. I instead suggested that he spoke a bit louder and more articulately to avoid misunderstandings since he often came across as a man of few words, as also his examples throughout this portrait indicate. On the other hand, Tomasz might have been mumbling a bit to hide his pronunciation, and it was therefore difficult to tell who was right. In the end, Tomasz' recordings also turned out to be very fruitful because they gave an interesting coherent insight into everyday language practices of a more or less all-Danish-speaking team at IBM, as well as the possibility of describing and comparing learners at different levels, as mentioned in the introduction to this chapter.

Tomasz seemed to have a clear *investment* in (Norton, 2000) and goal of learning Danish of almost *instrumental* motivational character (see Gardner & Lambert, 1997) because it was so strictly related to his career opportunities in Denmark:

Ex. 2:

- Charlotte: *So it was very much related to you career that you chose to speak Danish*
- Tomasz: *Yes*
- Charlotte: *Also when you started attending Danish classes*
- Tomasz: *Yeah at that time I thought not so much about it but you may say it is also a relevant thing*
- Charlotte: *For work or what*
- Tomasz: *Yes*
- Charlotte: *So it was also just because it was fun*

Tomasz: *Perhaps it was fun when I signed up in 2006 ([laughs])*
 Charlotte: *But it's not fun now ([laughs])*
 Tomasz: *No, ([laughs]) but it is when you are sitting in class it is pretty fun right? That student perspective that's not fun, that is just something you have to do*

(Tomasz, post Interview, p. 10-11)

Learning Danish had not always been fun and easy for Tomasz. He admitted to feeling frustrated sometimes that he was still not entirely fluent. However, his straightforward goal of learning Danish seemed to keep him going as did his positive experiences of practicing at work, as will be described later on. Tomasz also had clear *beliefs* (Barcelos & Kalaja, 2003) about what a successful language learning process involved as well as knowledge about his own learning style and preferences (see Chapter 2.2.2. on The Good Language Learner), as the following examples show.

Tomasz and his girlfriend attended Danish classes together at two different language schools, and both preferred the second school where the first three levels used pedagogical principles based on an *audio-lingual approach* (see e.g. Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Each lesson was structured around selected sentences the participants had to learn by heart and practice pronouncing accurately. Tomasz had taken private English lessons as a teenager based on a similar approach, and he found this way of learning very appealing:

Ex. 3:

Charlotte: *Okay and when did you learn English since you learned it that way, was it as a child or what*
 Tomasz: *No! I was 16 years old or something like that*
 Charlotte: *So you don't have English in school?*
 Tomasz: *Yes I do, but at the time it wasn't so good, and that's another thing, if you have to learn something, if you want to do it, and it is another way if you have to do something at school for English yeah ([laughs])*
 Charlotte: *Yeah okay so it wasn't that important ([laughs])*
 Tomasz: *No and it was a private class which I had to pay for it. I liked it. I thought it was a good method. For me! So*

(Tomasz, interview, p. 5)

Tomasz explained that the combination of having chosen to participate in classes he had paid for himself along with the appealing teaching method played an important part in his investment in learning English. He generally found a combination of teaching and everyday

practice to be the best combination for learning because practicing outside school was important to being able to communicate with other people than your teacher at school and learn to understand different speakers.

Tomasz described his level of Danish as “OK” but added that based on his grades from his final Danish exam, his level was “good” (Tomasz, interview, p. 2). The results of the Danish test from his last Danish class reflected which of the four language skills Tomasz mastered best, as he described:

Ex.4:

Charlotte: *So if you yourself had to say how good you are at Danish, what would you say*

Tomasz: *That's hard to say*

Charlotte: *[laughs] it's okay if you separate it and say I am really good at reading I am less good at*

Tomasz: *Yeah as I said then I don't think as good at speaking and writing, but if we look at the official result I got from Danish education it says I good*

Charlotte: *Okay and that was you passed module 5*

Tomasz: *Yes it was pd3 exam*

(Tomasz, interview, p. 2)

Tomasz received a very low grade in writing, a very good grade in reading and an average grade for conversation, including both speaking and listening, and he passed module 5 of Danish classes, which officially places him at C1 on the CEFR. This means that he has a high level of Danish, and according to the CEFR's general descriptors of listening comprehension, he is able to understand enough Danish to follow conversations about abstract and complex subjects, which he has no prior experience with, even though he might need to clarify specific details once in a while (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 66). This description seems suitable for Tomasz' listening comprehension since he is able to participate more or less without any serious problems in all situations in Danish at work, as I will describe in the following.

4.4.2 Language at work

At the time of the data generation, Tomasz was in the consultancy department of IBM and worked with IT, and he therefore did most of his work at the office in front of his computer.

Tomasz worked in an all-Danish team, and his recordings show that he had a lot of work-related conversations with his closest male colleague (Mc1). Nearly all their conversations at the office are related to specific details of programming, which was Tomasz' primary work task at the time. The following extract is one example out of many office conversations:

Ex.5:

Mc1: *Just keep it running*

Tomasz: *Okay*

Mc1: *So it's actually strange what you have to do there. You are in a 7.1 version and you do an upgrade on version 7.1, but so that is because there is something which is not there on version 7.1*

Tomasz: *But why am I not able to see what kind of products there are on the list*

Mc1: *You were able to see what product it was. Try cancelling*

Tomasz: *Yes now I can*

(Tomasz, day 3, rec. 7)

In the recording, Tomasz and his colleague are in front of Tomasz' computer, and their conversation is highly contextualized and *context embedded* (Cummins, 1982), in the sense that they are talking about things happening on the screen, and this makes the conversation easy to follow for all participants. Most of Tomasz' recordings at the office resemble this one, and Tomasz himself also described these recordings as typical in the post interview:

Ex. 6:

Charlotte: *Okay so a very typical day would be you sitting at the office and working and talking a lot with Mc1*

Tomasz: *Yes because it is him who I refer to directly*

Charlotte: *Okay and there are some women with you at lunch, are they also from the office*

Tomasz: *Yes it is them from the office but they actually sit at the other end of the office. It is a long office and we sit in the other side of it*

Charlotte: *Okay so you talk more or less as much as you usually do. So there is a little talking at the office but not so much*

Tomasz: *No there is not so much*

Charlotte: *It is only when it is work-related*

Tomasz: *Yes or in the morning when it is have you had a nice day or weekend*

Charlotte: *And then when you have lunch but it is only sometimes you have lunch with them*

Tomasz: *Yes sometimes with the other graduates*

(Tomasz, post interview, p. 6)

As Tomasz explains in this extract, he primarily works and interacts with Mc1 during a normal workday, but the two of them usually join the other colleagues from the office for lunch if Tomasz does not meet up with the other graduates. When attending lunch at work, Tomasz usually has no trouble understanding, but he does not take that much part in the conversations in the recordings, a matter I addressed in the post interview:

Ex. 7:

- Charlotte: *Would you say more if it were in English*
Tomasz: *Yeah I think. The problem is that I cannot find the words when I have to quickly*
Charlotte: *Would you take more initiative if it were in English*
Tomasz: *I actually think it just happens when I can say something then I say it*
Charlotte: *Okay so you very much just listen to what the others are saying*
Tomasz: *Yes*
Charlotte: *So it is not as much you who sit down and say listen to this*
Tomasz: *No*

(Tomasz, post interview, p. 2-3)

Tomasz finds it more difficult to find the words in Danish than in English, but he also rarely takes the initiative or joins in on conversations unless he has something he finds important and relevant to add.

In Tomasz' first recording of a lunch situation, he is sitting outside the cafeteria with his colleagues from the office. There are at least three women besides Tomasz and Mc1, and the conversation goes back and forth between different topics concerning summer holiday, children starting school, the weather, etc. Tomasz only participates briefly three times in the conversation, which lasts a little more than half an hour: once when he was directly addressed; once when it is related to IBM; and once when the conversation involves a sport, which a friend of Tomasz' also practices. In the post interview, Tomasz explained that he found the conversation a bit boring and therefore did not participate much:

Ex. 8:

- Charlotte: *But that lunch you don't say that much either*
Tomasz: *Ehm no [smiles]*
Charlotte: *And that is once more because you don't think that*
Tomasz: *Yeah nobody asks [we both laugh] they talked about actually I can't remember it was something with children*

Charlotte: *You didn't want to talk about that*
 Tomasz: *No I don't have any child [laughs] so*
 (Tomasz, post Interview, p.6)

Tomasz repeated his point about having nothing to contribute with in relation to a second lunch recording. In this recording, Mc1 and another male colleague (Mc2) are having lunch in the canteen when Tomasz joins them. At some point, the conversation leads to a discussion about geocaching, which Tomasz does not participate in at all, and in the post interview, Tomasz explained that he did not understand what they were talking about, but also that he had nothing to say about the subject. When listening to this recording, I also had trouble understanding what the topic was at first, but after a while, I was able to guess the topic from their descriptions of looking for geocaches using a GPS because I have relatives who do it. I was able to use background information I had about the topic which Tomasz did not have. This recording is therefore an example of lack of understanding because of lack of knowledge of a specific topic rather than a lack of general linguistic knowledge, which is a comprehension problem that also L1 users experience. Tomasz' explanation of why he did not try to ask for clarification indicates that he grasped enough of the exchange to determine that he was not interested in this specific subject, as he himself put it, "*Jeg har ikke noget at sige om den der* [**ENG: I have nothing to say about that**]" (Tomasz, post interviews, p. 2).

However, it also seems that the two male colleagues in this other lunch interaction are reluctant to spend time explaining things to Tomasz in what they seem to find an exciting conversation, as the following example shows:

Ex. 9:

Mc2: *But it's almost all the former stars that play in our veteran division*
 Mc1: *Mm. Yeah*
 Tomasz: *Veterans division what is that?*
 Mc2: *What*
 Tomasz: *Veterans division what is that?*
 Mc2: *In badminton*
 Tomasz: *Okay... At IBM club?*
 Mc2: *No no. No at X badminton club. We now have two teams on elite level. That is the first team they are pretty, no one can beat them. So. But that's dangerous because it is unstable. Suddenly they disappear maybe, and then all teams move up like that. So it is fine that we xxx with the good ones but*

Mc1: *But I can imagine they would go the same places*

Mc2: *Yeah, yeah because that's what's fun*

(Tomasz, day 2, rec. 7)

At this point in the interaction, Tomasz has tried to join in a few times by asking questions regarding Mc2's story about badminton, but Mc2 does not really reply, and Mc1 and Mc2 continues while Tomasz goes quiet. This example shows that comprehension is not always just about language level but also about social relations and possibilities for participating, and the fact that interlocutors include some participants in an interaction and not others, as in the example above, is a recurring and inherent part of social interaction (see also Chapter 2.4).

Besides listening to Danish at lunch and at the office, Tomasz also often attends meetings in Danish, but as he explains, the language of a meeting depends upon the type of meeting, and the language choice is not necessarily made explicit before the meeting:

Ex.10

Charlotte: *Does it happen that it is in Danish when it is someone you don't know or is it in English*

Tomasz: *That depends on the meeting if it xxx*

Charlotte: *But you decide before the meeting*

Tomasz: *No no. Or sometimes I know if there is someone who is not from here but if it is someone at department meeting we have small offices but it is a big organization because it is a big organization meeting and those meetings are actually very much in Danish*

(Tomasz, think-a-loud, p. 5)

Tomasz mentioned being comfortable attending meetings in Danish, which may be due to the fact that he had made an agreement with his manager about his Danish six months before the data generation. They have agreed that Tomasz will try to use Danish as much as possible at work, and during the data generation, Tomasz records a meeting with this manager where, among other things, they discuss his progress in Danish:

Ex.11:

Manager: *All in all I think, well, it is my opinion that you have done well. You have met the challenges... And the language? How do you think it has worked out with the language?*

Tomasz: *I think it is much better*

Manager: *You have also been here for a while now*

Tomasz: *One year yes*

Manager: *How do you feel about speaking Danish?*

Tomasz: *It's okay*

Manager: *But you would prefer speaking English [laughs]*

Tomasz: *Definitely [laughs]*

Manager: *If you could chose [laughs]*

Tomasz: *Yeah that's a different question*

Manager: *But I know, and it is probably a little bit me who have told you that you have to because I think it in the long run will be easier for you with costumers being good at Danish. There is also something about being more part of informal conversation when you speak Danish. I hope that even though it is perhaps a little bit annoying that we stick to it and don't switch to English... McI and you, do you speak English?*

Tomasz: *No we speak Danish. But when I write it is English. But he writes back in Danish*

Manager: *Yes I also think that in the long run. When I started I had barely written anything in English. It just did it and then it got better over the years. No one thinks about spelling mistakes. I think you should try. Start writing a little in Danish and we won't laugh. Only if it is really funny [laughs]*

(Tomasz, day 3, rec. 8)

Tomasz' manager has obviously encouraged Tomasz to use Danish at work and she is therefore very supportive, which seems to be related to her own experiences with learning English. The support Tomasz receives from his manager and his colleagues seems to be important to his progress and investment in Danish. His manager even mentions in the meeting above that she perceives his understanding of Danish to be fluent, and Tomasz does generally appear fully capable of understanding and participating in more or less all of his recordings, as will be further elaborated on in the following.

4.4.3 Experiences with listening

As previously explained, Tomasz does not appear to have any problems with meetings being held in Danish. However, both the recorded meetings described above only include him and one other participant, and being in a *listener role* as *participant* (Rost, 2011) is, according to Tomasz, the least problematic way to listen:

Ex.12

Charlotte: *So you don't actually experience that often not understanding what people are saying*

Tomasz: *No*

Charlotte: *So that is not one of you typical problems*

Tomasz: *Once if there is, if we have a meeting for the department and people are speaking very fast I have a problem understanding because I cannot hear those words that what they are saying because people speak too fast, and then there are also sometimes they use some words I don't know*

Charlotte: *Okay but it is mostly in meetings that you sometimes have problems*

Tomasz: *Yes*

Charlotte: *It is not that often in social conversations*

Tomasz: *Ehm yes, normally if we are talking like we are now it is not a problem and I can ask again but if we are more people it can be a problem if they speak fast*

(Tomasz, interview, p. 2)

Both of the meetings in Tomasz' recordings involve only him and one of his managers. Tomasz is therefore spoken to directly, and his interlocutors seem to make an effort to check his understanding by asking follow-up questions. Fewer people also usually means less noise, and Tomasz mentions noise at a party as one of the few recurring obstacles he still encounters when listening in Danish; he also mentioned that some people speak too fast.

The one-on-one meeting situation also makes it easier for Tomasz to ask for clarification, which he does once during the meeting with his manager mentioned above. In the post interview, Tomasz explains why he asked for this clarification:

Ex. 13:

Charlotte: *You also said there that you did not understand. Was that the content?*

Tomasz: *Yes that was the content*

Charlotte: *Okay so there you understood the words but not the content*

Tomasz: *Yes*

(...)

Charlotte: *Why do you think you didn't understand?*

Tomasz: *It didn't sound so right the way she said it to me*

Charlotte: *Okay so you didn't agree*

Tomasz: *Yes*

(Tomasz, post interview, p.4)

Tomasz had a different take on the matter and therefore asked the manager to explain and clarify, and after her clarification, he understood what she was saying and was able to argue

against it. This again resembles a listening problem, which also often occurs in interaction between L1 users.

Tomasz further points out that he does not usually have problems asking people to repeat or clarify, but that he remembers pretending to understand Danish earlier on because he felt uncomfortable asking again. He has, however, reached a level where he only sometimes experiences comprehension problems, for example, at meetings, but he usually knows how to handle it:

Ex.14:

Charlotte: *What if there is a meeting in Danish and you notice there are some things you are not really sure about, would you try to find out afterwards what it meant or*

Tomasz: *It depends on if it has something to do with language directly when we are in a meeting, but if I think it is something that is important I think I should know then I ask afterwards*

Charlotte: *Do you write it down then?*

Tomasz: *Yeah I do*

Charlotte: *What about dictionaries*

Tomasz: *Yes sometimes if it is just a word I don't understand I use the dictionaries but if it is some kind of information I don't understand I will ask someone else*

Charlotte: *So it matters if it is a word or an entire sentence*

Tomasz: *Yes*

Charlotte: *So you always know whether it is a word or it is some information?*

Tomasz: *Yes you can actually always figure that out, because there might be more words that I don't understand in a sentence but you can see from the structure, design. If I know that sentence before or the subject. So of course if I don't understand the word but if I understand the meaning and can figure out, but if I cannot understand the meaning of the entire subject*

Charlotte: *Subject*

COM: *Tomasz says the word 'subject' in English, and I translate into Danish, which is 'emne'*

Tomasz: *Okay ([laughs]) then I ask someone else*

Charlotte: *Okay so you actually don't think it is that difficult to figure out whether it is a word or the subject because if it is a word you understand all of the things around it*

Tomasz: *It is just it can be some specific thing about something about something means but I don't think it changes the entire meaning*

(Tomasz, think-a-loud, p. 6)

As this example indicates, Tomasz is very aware of what strategies he uses to handle his comprehension problems, and he knows whether his problem are due to lack of knowledge about the subject or lack of understanding of specific words. In meetings, he usually has visual clues, such as power points or agendas which help him understand, and he always makes sure to prepare before the meetings. Tomasz tries to prepare for meetings both in English and in Danish, and these preparations seem like a good strategy for following the discussions in the meetings. Tomasz has to focus more when listening in Danish, and he is sometimes unsure of his understanding in Danish, whereas his listening in English is automatized. When listening in, for example, phone or conference calls, Tomasz always switches to English to be sure he understands, because he finds it more difficult to listen without visual clues than when he is able to see the person he is listening to.

In the think-a-loud, Tomasz experienced a bit of comprehension trouble precisely because of the lack of visuals in the exercise as well as the lack of co-text. However, he explained that he often listened to the radio program I used for the exercise, and he therefore already had a lot of background knowledge as well as some strategies for how to listen to this specific program. He even mentioned that it was probably easier for him than for others because he was used to the form and the participants of the specific program. After the first extract, Tomasz explained what he heard but mentioned that he lacked some information to fully understand what they were talking about, but the second one was different:

Ex.15:

Tomasz: *That one I actually didn't understand*

Charlotte: *No*

Tomasz: *What he is saying. Ehm I didn't understand the meaning*

Charlotte: *Okay did you understand some of the words*

Tomasz: *Ehm yes the last couple of words*

Charlotte: *Yes. What for example. You remember*

Tomasz: *No*

(Tomasz, think-a-loud, p. 1)

Tomasz had problems understanding the content of the second extract and was not able to remember the words he recognized, and it seems that Tomasz was not able to remember the words because he could not figure out the intended meaning. The third extract continued from where the second started, and this time Tomasz was satisfied with his comprehension. He

explained that he “*bare hører hvad de siger [ENG: just heard what they said]*” (Tomasz, think-a-loud, p. 2), indicating that he understood it automatically without comprehension problems. He related this to the fact that he was used to listening to the program. He was not able to repeat what he heard, and he laughed when I asked him what he heard. It appeared as though he found it embarrassing that he said he understood but was unable to repeat it. Tomasz clearly did understand something, but it seems that he perhaps only experienced understanding ‘on the surface’ in the same way as how readers are able to read out loud but not remember and understand the text in-depth. Tomasz may therefore have understood the words but not connected them to an overall meaning. He may also have registered the words and found them to be reasonably related and make sense but not have reflected upon the intended message and may therefore not necessarily remember them, which is reasonable to assume that most listeners do all the time. Tomasz comprehension problems in this extract seems dependent on the specific think-aloud context and perhaps my misleading question about what he heard since the I had introduced the task as focused on what he did not what he understood. This example therefore shows how complex comprehension is and how it may take place at different levels and in different degrees, but it also shows the complexity of actually investigating and analyzing listening comprehension, which I will be discussing more thoroughly in Chapter 5.

After the sixth extract, Tomasz explained that he was focusing on the speakers’ speech tempo and related this to situations at work where he often decided to focus more attention on the people he knew spoke fast, or people he had not listened to before. He also described how he tried to think about the content of the meeting before it took place in order to be prepared:

Ex.16:

- Charlotte: *So do you ever experience some of these typical situations. Do you do the same when you try to listen to what they are saying in the same way as you are listening to the radio?*
- Tomasz: *Yes if there is someone I don't know I try focusing on he or she or what are saying what words*
- Charlotte: *Yes okay so if we try imagining that you are going to a meeting with a lot of people you don't know, but you know it is in Danish, do you try thinking about anything specific before that*
- Tomasz: *Yes I think about what we are going to talk about and try focusing*
- Charlotte: *So you try to prepare*
- Tomasz: *Yes*
- (Tomasz, think-a-loud, p. 4)

Tomasz generally seems to have very fruitful strategies for handling different listening situations at work, and he also shows great awareness of his usual problems and strategies. He is for example able to identify what type of comprehension problems he has and he switches between two types of strategies for handling comprehension problems similar to bottom-up processing and top-down processing, and he therefore seems to be using Haastrup's (1989) cues of understanding successfully. Tomasz explained that he handles problems with specific words by writing them down and looking them up in the dictionary after a meeting, and if the comprehension problem is related to what he refers to as "information", he tries to ask a colleague to explain it after the meeting. Tomasz generally only seem to have problems understanding the key ideas about a message once in a while or sometimes one or two specific words, which does not necessarily affect his comprehension of the overall content. These problems, according to Goh (2000), are high-level listener problems, which can be described as utilization problems linking specific words with long-term memory or as a lack of knowledge of a specific theme, which will be further discussed in Chapter 5 across the cases.

Tomasz' recordings and descriptions show what a high-level L2 listener experiences when listening in different situations at work. Tomasz' listening comprehension problems seem similar to those of L1 listeners, who also experience comprehension problems depending on the degree of knowledge of specific content or because of physical or social circumstances, such as fatigue or noise. Tomasz' problems with understanding Danish in the extracts shown in this portrait are ascribable to a lack of mutual agreement with the manager, or a lack of knowledge of a specific topic at lunch, but they never seem to be related to perceiving and recognizing words in Danish. However, it is difficult to tell whether Tomasz is a good listener because he has a high linguistic level, or because he has good strategies, or a combination of the two, and this discussion will also be further addressed in the following cross-case chapter.

4.4.4 Additional comments from the member-checking session

The member-checking session with Tomasz was the first member-checking I did because Tomasz had to move the meeting forward since he was going on paternity leave. Tomasz was once again a man of few words, who did not have any comments regarding the text, but he was curious about what this kind of analysis could actually be used for. He thought the portrait resembled him well and he laughed when I asked him how he felt about the comments

about him being a man of few words and a mumblor, to which he responded that he still mumbled. Tomasz also explained that he had taken the pronunciation course he had asked for at the time of the data generation, and that he generally felt he was better at both speaking and listening than the last time I talked to him. He was happy that I found his level high and explained that he still spoke a lot of Danish at work, but he now had more international colleagues. Tomasz and his girlfriend had married and were still planning to stay in Denmark, so they were trying to think of a name for the baby that worked in both Danish and Polish.

4.5 Summary

In the previous sections, I described four individual learners' investment in Danish, their language practices at work and their experiences with listening in Danish as an L2. The portraits exemplified how the learners' language level, prior experiences and social circumstances influenced their investment in Danish, their beliefs about themselves as language learners, as well as their actions for coping with listening in Danish as an L2 in different situations. The portraits also described the language practices of the participants' everyday work lives, giving an insight into the language choices between English and Danish at an international workplace in Denmark with English as corporate language.

The portrait of Maria showed a learner with low (listening) proficiency level in Danish and a complex investment in Danish in general. Maria described herself as a poor language learner and found Danish a difficult language to learn. She had focused on learning English when she first came to Denmark and found it difficult to prioritize spending time and mental energy on learning more Danish because her family and her health were more important. She regretted not being able to socialize with the other parents at her daughter's school, however, because her Danish was not good enough, and it bothered her in her everyday work life that her colleagues in her Danish speaking team had to use English just because of her. Maria, like Pilar and Robert, was not required or specifically encouraged to learn Danish in her job at IBM Denmark, where English was the corporate language, and her colleagues were generally very considerate about using English with her. However, Maria's colleagues often used Danish when addressing each other, making it difficult for Maria to participate. She sometimes tried to listen and understand when Danish was spoken around her, using different

strategies for comprehension of Danish, but she often ended up not participating or encouraging a switch to English.

Pilar did not mind communicating in an ‘un-perfect’ Danish, on the other hand, and she described having a preference for learning languages through interaction. Pilar’s investment in Danish was related to fitting in and integrating at work as well as in Danish society in general, but because she primarily worked in English and had made a conscious choice to invest a lot of energy in her children’s acquisition of Spanish at home, she found it difficult to find time and opportunities to practice Danish. Spanish was important to Pilar because she felt a strong connection to her Spanish family and to Spanish culture, but also because she found that she could only express herself to her children the way she wanted by using Spanish. However, wanted to improve her Danish and found it natural that her Danish colleagues preferred speaking Danish with each other. It was important for her that her colleagues felt comfortable using Danish when she was there, and she therefore made an effort to participate in interactions in Danish. Pilar tried to reply in Danish when she was spoken to in Danish but often found it necessary to make use of English to be sure she understood and was understood by her interlocutors with the goal of communicating as smoothly and politely as possible.

Robert often listened in Danish at work but usually spoke English. He had developed fruitful routines and strategies for listening and participating in meetings at work, where the other participants spoke Danish, but he found listening and participating in lunch difficult because there was no clear structure to the interactions, and the topics shifted. Robert, like Maria, described himself as a perfectionist who did not like to speak if he was not sure he could say it right, but he liked to listen at work and to the radio when driving to work in the morning. He preferred learning languages on his own or in a safe environment, such as the one-on-one practice he had with his wife when learning Afrikaans. However, he shared many of his wife’s experiences with learning Danish in the interviews as examples of a successful language learner, whom he admired and felt he could learn from. Robert’s investment in Danish was related to his life values about making an effort in the society in which he lived, and he therefore made an effort to show his colleagues as well as customers that he was learning Danish. He refused to become like his grandparents, who had never learned Afrikaans while living in South Africa, and he stressed that he wanted his children to be

proficient in English, Afrikaans and Danish and be able to communicate with everyone around them.

Tomasz' investment in Danish was of an almost instrumental character as his reason for learning Danish was more or less strictly related to his career. He was ambitious in his job as well as his language learning and, like Robert, he wanted to participate in the study because he hoped to learn something. Tomasz explained that he found a combination of classes and practice the best way to learn a language, and he had signed up for Danish classes which made use of an audiolingual approach that he found beneficial for learning languages, having tried it before when learning English at a private school as a teenager. Tomasz explained that because he himself had decided to pay for the English lessons, he found that when he made a decision to learn something, he was more motivated to do it than when somebody told him to, like when he had compulsory English classes in school as a child. It seemed that his clear incentive to learn Danish as well as his investment in the time and energy the learning of Danish required had paid off, and he therefore found himself able to use Danish in more or less all work-related situations, and he had the drive to learn more. Tomasz had a high level of Danish and rarely experienced problems listening and understanding in Danish, and if he did, he was aware of what strategies to use. However, the portrait of Tomasz also showed that comprehension problems are not always about lack of linguistic knowledge in general, but can be related to a lack of specific linguistic knowledge of a topic (which is difficult to prepare for) as well as different perspectives among interlocutors in an interaction. This indicates that that having a high language level and sufficient comprehension skills are not always sufficient for participating in social interactions (at work).

In sum, the four case study portraits provided an in-depth understanding of adult L2 learners' experiences with learning and listening in Danish as an L2 at work. In the following chapter, I compare and discuss the differences and similarities of the cases by addressing the overall research questions of the study.

Chapter 5: Cross-case analysis - L2 listening at work

In the previous chapter, I highlighted the uniqueness and situatedness of individual learners' experiences with listening in Danish as an L2. In the current chapter, I compare the individual perspectives of the four case study portraits from the previous chapter in a cross-case analysis addressing the research questions of the study (also listed in Chapter 1):

1. When do international employees working in Danish companies with English as a corporate language listen in Danish as an L2?
2. What listening comprehension problems do they experience, and why are some listening situations more difficult than others?
3. How do the international employees handle different listening situations at work?

I start out by focusing on the language choices between Danish and English at the international workplace in Denmark, and *when* Danish is spoken to and around the international employees in 5.1, because this is a necessary background for discussing *when* the participants actually listen to Danish at work. In 5.2, I discuss *what* listening comprehension problems the case participants experience when listening to Danish as an L2 at work, and *why* some situations are more difficult to listen in than others. In 5.3, I focus on *how* the participants handle different listening situations at work, but I also address the overall research question of the study, namely *how* social and cognitive parameters influence L2 listening in different situations, and how this can be investigated as a concluding discussion of the chapter. Along the way, I refer to relevant examples from the data with the case participants as well as from the interviews, diary studies and the focus group interview with participants from different workplaces (see Table 3.1 for an overview of data). Throughout the chapter, I highlight findings in bold and important theoretical concepts in italics. The overall purpose of the chapter is to compare and expand on the experiences of the case participants by discussing tendencies across the data and conduct a trustworthy analysis of the international employees' experiences with listening in Danish as L2 at work.

5.1 (Possible) Listening situations and listener roles at the international workplace in Denmark

In the following two sections, I describe and discuss *when* the participants experience that Danish is spoken to and around them, as well as what their recordings show, and how this influences *when* the participants actually listen to Danish at work. As also mentioned in the case study portraits, Danish is used by the participants' Danish colleagues (and sometimes the participants themselves) in many different situations at work, creating possible listening situations in Danish for the international employees. Table 5.1 below gives an overview of the situations reported by the four case participants as well as a brief description of the participants' language use at work, summarizing key points from the case study portraits in Chapter 4. However, as also described in the case portraits, different rules seem to apply to the use of English and Danish in different settings depending on the participants present as well as how important the content is for everyone to understand. In the following section, I discuss the language choices at the international workplace in Denmark.

	Maria	Pilar	Robert	Tomasz
Language at work	Danish speaking team. Maria only speaks English at work but sometimes tries to listen to Danish at lunch or meetings. Wants to participate, attempts by using English. Shuts out Danish when working.	Has an international role, but 'social team' is Danish. Danish used 'in the social part', English for professional. Pilar tries to integrate and participate in Danish, tells her colleagues to speak Danish to her.	Danish team. Robert listens to Danish every day at work, especially in meetings, rarely speaks Danish, uses English instead.	Danish team. Tomasz uses Danish all the time at work for speaking and listening. Has an agreement with his manager about using Danish; now also for writing.
Listening situations in Danish	Office Team meeting only meeting in Danish Lunch Dinner with colleagues Other: daughter's homework and TV	Office Department meetings and informal meetings Lunch Administrative work Other: teachers, other parents, family	Office Meetings Lunch Other: supermarket, practical things, car rental, friends	Office Meetings Lunch

Table 5.1. Overview of the case participants' language practices and listening situations at work

5.1.1 Danish with Danes and English with internationals

As described in the case study portraits, the case participants all worked in predominantly Danish teams, and this naturally influenced the language choices in their everyday work lives. As the title of this section indicates, the data of the present study shows a tendency for Danish to be spoken among the Danish colleagues at the international workplace, and for English to be used when international employees are present, unless the international employees have a high level of Danish. The language choices between English and Danish at the workplaces in the present study are therefore similar to the language choices described in Lønsmann's (2011) study of the Danish company Lundbeck. In the following, I describe and discuss these language choices using examples from the data as a way of showing when Danish is spoken to and around the international employees.

The participants' descriptions point towards a tendency for Danish to be used for more 'social' non-work-related interactions at work and English for work-related interactions. This tendency is similar to Pilar's description of English as the "official language" (Pilar, interview, p. 5) for "working working" and Danish "just for social reasons" (see Chapter 4.2.2). However, as the following two examples with the case participant Maria as well as another participant indicate, the use of Danish versus English also seems to have to do with who is addressed:

- Charlotte: So and your colleagues now, are they mostly Danish?
Maria: Yeah, only Danish
Charlotte: And they speak English when you are there?
Maria: Yeah
Charlotte: But Danish to each other?
Maria: Yeah
Charlotte: So does it happen that they speak Danish to each other and English to you when you are sitting at lunch for example?
Maria: Yeah, but I can understand something
(Maria, interview, p. 7)

If it involves me in a meeting or whatever in a gathering they will immediately, they are polite enough to explain to me or switch to English. Basically I have never seen that I have been invited in a meeting or in gathering and I am sitting there like a stupid guy and not knowing what is going on, so they make sure that I am part of it also

(Anish, interview, IBM)

The international employees in Lønsmann's (2011) study, similar to Pilar's description above, described the language choices between Danish and English at the workplace as dependent on the formality of the situation. This dichotomy of informal versus formal, social versus work-related, reflects a division that most studies on language at work refer to in different terms, for example, small-talk versus meetings (Holmes & Stubbe, 2003) or relational versus transactional (Gumperz 1964, Sandwall, 2013). However, as Lønsmann argues, these dichotomies are too simplistic to actually describe the language choices between English and Danish at the international workplace in Denmark. Instead, she argues that the language choices at Lundbeck are primarily dependent on the *direct addressees' perceived language competence* as well as the *speakers' subjective competence* and the *content* and *genre* of the interactions, as also described in Chapter 2.4.

In the data generation for this study, I made use of a similar dichotomy, referring to place by contrasting lunch and meetings as common sense situations the participants could refer to when explaining language use at work (see Chapter 3.2 for further explanation of the data generation). According to Lønsmann, this dichotomy of lunch versus meetings is therefore also a too simplistic description for the language choices at the international workplaces in the present study. Nevertheless, Danish *is*, as the participants point out, more often used in informal relational interactions at lunch than in work-related transactional interactions in meetings. This is the case in both the present study as well as in Lønsmann's and partly Jürna's (2014) study on international researchers' language use at the University of Copenhagen, precisely because of the above-mentioned criteria for language choices between English and Danish described in Lønsmann's study. Different (implicit and explicit) rules for language use seem to apply to lunch and meeting situations. However, the data from the present study also indicates that these rules for language choice can be overruled by **routines or explicit agreements** about language use at work between the international employees and their colleagues or managers.

The examples above therefore indicate that Danish colleagues speak Danish with each other as much as they can, but English with the international employees who are not considered proficient enough to participate in interactions in Danish. The choice of Danish versus English is therefore, as in Lønsmann's (2011) study, primarily dependent on the perceived language competence of the direct addressees in an interaction. However, as the examples above also indicate, the international employees often experience that the Danish colleagues switch to English because of them, and this especially happens in meetings. The two following examples from Pilar and another participant indicate this switch from Danish to English in meetings:

But sometimes I just go to the, for example they can have an informal meeting, and I just go there and they *skift* [ENG: *switch*] they change to English, and sometimes I try to follow in Danish and no *no jeg kan forstå* [ENG: *I understand*] and try, I can try to be more integrate to that

(Pilar, interview, p. 4; see also Chapter 4.2.2)

Andreas: I think. Looking back a little, I think, first of all whenever I am in a room with a client there are a lot of people sitting around and all Danes, they would switch to English just because of me. I feel more and more, let's say, like now that I have been here for some time, I feel, you know. it would be definitely, let's say, a nice thing at least for maybe in the start and maybe in the end also we keep it in Danish. I don't know why I haven't done it. They of course could do it, but I think I would hear more if things would have been kept in Danish instead of English

Charlotte: Mm, because you feel like it's a bit annoying that they have to switch

Andreas: Yeah, exactly

Charlotte: Do you think that they think it is annoying? Because the company language is English

Andreas: Yeah. I know that. I don't think that they really think it is annoying because they are very much used to it, so it is for them not a big effort. It is still in some of the meetings I feel that the people would prefer to speak in Danish because, you know, when it gets very technical they are just faster explaining themselves in Danish

(Interview, Andreas, IBM)

As a participant in Lønsmann's (2011) study described, there is "a kind of unwritten rule that if there is one person in a meeting who doesn't know Danish then you only speak English" (p. 130), and this rule also seems to apply to the language choices at the international workplace in the present study. However, there seems to be an exception at the department meetings at IBM Denmark, which are primarily held in Danish. The choice of Danish for the department

meetings seems dependent on how many Danes are present as well as on the perceived English competence of the Danish employees' but could also be dependent on the language norm Lønsmann describes as "Danish because we are in Denmark" (see Chapter 2.4). Lønsmann argues that the Danish colleagues' use of Danish with each other is generally considered legitimate and natural because of this language norm. This norm to a certain extent also seems to be embedded in the international employees' perceptions of the language use at the workplace in this study. Pilar, for example, specifically mentions that Danish is natural when "you are in Denmark" (Pilar, interview, p. 4; see Chapter 4.2.2). The use of Danish among the Danes also seems to be considered natural by the participant in the following example:

So we'll be standing around in a group and it will be all Danish, and you don't have too many options you can either leave or you can just stand there and wait until there's a break or someone starts laughing and you know why and you can join in, or they'll notice that I'm there and they'll start apologizing or saying, it had to be in Danish, I'm sorry. And I appreciate them saying that but it's OK. I know it's more efficient or people are tired or it's an emotional discussion

(Elsa, interview, IBM)

It is considered legitimate that the Danish employees sometimes speak Danish to each other even though the international employees are present because the content and genre allow for a certain degree of exclusion. Danish is therefore more legitimate in non-work-related interactions at work, such as lunch and breaks, when it is not as important that everyone understands and is directly addressed. This also means that it is legitimate to speak Danish during interactions which occur when people gather in a meeting room and leave the meeting room, because not everyone is directly addressed, and because there is a change of content and style. However, as soon as the actual meeting starts, there is a switch to English in order to include everyone, as some of the examples above indicated, and as described in the case portrait of Maria (Chapter 4.1) as well as in Chapter 2.3.

However, language choices depending on the competence of the interlocutors or the genre and content of the interaction can also be overruled by 'agreements' and routines between the international employees and their Danish colleagues or managers. As described in the case study portrait in Chapter 4.3, Robert had worked out special strategies and routines for participating in the best possible way in meetings by listening in Danish, but he also

mentioned having made or developed specific ‘agreements’ or routines for language use at the office with individual colleagues, as the following example indicates:

So Fc2 actually is the one who perseveres. She will continue with me in Danish until I get stuck and then she will switch over to English. Fc1 will carry on in English until she gets stuck and she will switch to Danish, and then if I still don’t understand we will try again in English

(Robert, post interview, p. 6)

Robert’s colleagues seemed to have different motives for their language choices with him, and whereas Fc2 may be speaking Danish to Robert because she wants to support his learning, she may also be using Danish because she finds her competence in English too low to be interacting in English all the time. Fc1, on the other hand, may be using English with Robert because she herself wants to practice her English (perhaps even more because Robert is an L1 speaker of English), or because she actually finds Robert’s competence in Danish too low. Even though Robert also had routines with his colleagues for participating receptively in meetings in Danish, he rarely participated at lunch in Danish neither receptively nor productively, and it may therefore be the case that his colleagues *do* find it more effective to use English with him sometimes because they feel they have to slow down their Danish to be sure he follows. Furthermore, *receptive multilingualism* (Beerkens & ten Thije, 2011), which refers to interlocutors in an interaction speaking their respective L1s but listening in each other’s L1s, can be difficult without practice.

The language use between Robert and his colleagues can therefore again be explained by a combination of the Danish colleagues’ subjective competence in English and the perceived competence of the international colleagues’ (i.e., Robert’s) Danish, but the choice of Danish over English as dependent on content and genre is in Robert’s case overruled by routines and ‘agreements’ with different colleagues in different settings. As described in Chapter 4.4., Tomasz also had a clear explicit agreement with his manager about using Danish at work, and it seemed that this explicit agreement partly explained Tomasz’ continuing progress in Danish. Other participants mentioned similar examples of ‘agreements’ with colleagues or managers at work which had had a positive influence on their learning process:

[Min chef] hun er bare sådan en type som griner. Hun måske skabte en atmosfære, hvor det var ikke så højtideligt, at man lavede en fejl. Så det var ikke sådan, nu er det pinligt. Hun grinede bare højt, så man følte sig ikke så genert.

ENG: *[My boss] she is just that kind of person that laughs. She perhaps created an atmosphere where it wasn't so serious that you made a mistake. So it wasn't like, now it is embarrassing. She just laughed out loud so you didn't feel so shy.*

(Minna, interview, IBM)

Pilar similarly mentioned a certain colleague who always addressed her in Danish, and Maria mentioned a fruitful agreement about using Danish with a new colleague in the member-checking session. Maria, however, also had an imposed 'agreement' with her manager about participating in the team meetings in Danish. Maria had difficulty understanding and participating, and, more importantly, did not seem comfortable with the arrangement. Maria's 'agreement' with her manager is therefore an example of a less functional explication of language use. Apart from this (lack of) 'agreement', the case participants, as well as some of the other participants, had agreements and routines which seemed to explain how everyday language practices created beneficial possibilities for practicing Danish with supportive and patient interlocutors.

The choice of Danish for the team meetings in Maria's case also seemed to have to do with one of Maria's colleague's subjective as well as perceived language competence in English as being too low to speak English all the time. This colleague sometimes preferred using Danish over English and even directly addressed Maria in Danish, for example, at the dinner after work (see Chapter 4.1.2). The colleague did not seem to want to speak English in front of his Danish colleagues, and the choice of Danish at this dinner was also legitimate for him because it took place after work and involved non-work-related interactions.

This example also shows, however, that the choice of Danish among the Danish colleagues may sometimes be a necessary choice for some in order to save mental energy because they find using English difficult and mentally demanding, in the same way as some of the international employees have difficulty listening to Danish all the time. The Danish colleagues' use of Danish at the workplace is therefore not necessarily a matter of excluding the international colleagues but rather a choice to include other Danish colleagues and/or a matter of their language competence in English. Nevertheless, choosing between Danish and

English may sometimes lead to an exclusion of some potential participants. In the following section, I address *when* the international employees actually listen in Danish, linking it to listener roles and the discussion of inclusion and exclusion in interactions. I sum up both language choices and listener roles in 5.1.3.

5.1.2 Listening or not listening and the ability to choose to listen

As mentioned in the previous section, the international employees' perceived competence in Danish influences how much Danish is spoken directly to them, but the international employees naturally also take part in interactions at the workplace where they are not the only addressees in both work-related and non-work-related situations. In this section, I discuss when the international employees actually listen in Danish at work, and how this is dependent on their ability and choice to listen and understand. I will primarily describe and discuss the case participants' reported experiences with listening and *not* listening but also include examples from other participants to expand on the case participants' descriptions when relevant.

The case participants' recordings showed that they all four **made an effort to listen in Danish when** they were **directly addressed, and when** it was **expected** and **required** that they listened (and understood) in, for example, meetings or while having one-on-one conversations. Maria and Tomasz both explained that understanding Danish was easier when they were spoken to directly, that is, when they were *participants* in an interaction (See Chapter 4.2 for further explanation of audience roles and listener roles). Tomasz further explained that he rarely experienced comprehension problems, and especially not in one-on-one interactions with non-work-related content, because he was in a listener role as participant where he could easily ask for clarification because of the informal character of the interaction. By contrast, Tomasz found it more difficult to ask for clarification in a meeting with more people because he was in a listener role as *auditor* and therefore had limited rights to respond and was not expected to respond nor participate. Pilar and Robert described similar experiences with the department meetings, but Robert also mentioned that because he was not expected to participate in these meetings, he found it easier to relax and tune in and out of listening.

As described in Chapter 2.4, speakers choose what language to use depending on whom they are speaking to, thereby sometimes placing the audience in specific *audience roles* (Bell, 1984), but the audience, that is the listeners, can also themselves chose to take on different *listener roles* (Rost, 2011). Listeners may choose to take on active listener roles as participants in interactions even though they do not have to, or they may choose to take on roles as overhearers and not participate actively but still be listening. The audience roles, as addressed in the previous section and in Chapter 2.4, are relevant when showing when Danish is used productively at work, in the way Lønsmann (2011) did, but listener roles, are relevant when describing *when* the international employees in the present study actually report listening. In the following, I make use of the concept of listener roles to discuss the participants' **ability** and **possibility** of choosing to listen or not.

As mentioned in Chapter 4.1, Maria described trying to listen and understand Danish in some situations at work, but she also explained that she became very tired when listening in Danish, and that when she was doing something else, like working at the office or driving her car, she was not able to listen and understand Danish at all, because it required too much concentration to actually perceive and recognize words in Danish. Maria thus described being in situations where Danish was spoken around her but not to her, that is, situations where she potentially could be in a listener role as a *overhearer*, but where her lack of linguistic knowledge in Danish seemed to force her into a, in my terminology, role as **not-even-overhearer**, which I will be further elaborating on in the following. Maria was able to work and listen at the same time when her colleagues were speaking English, however. She perhaps even found it difficult *not* to listen when she was able to understand what her colleagues were saying in English, in the same way as L1 listeners may find it difficult *not* to listen in on others' conversations, for example, on the bus or at the office because it is difficult to stop automatic listening processes.

Similarly, Pilar's recordings showed that Danish was more or less constantly spoken around her at the office, but she also reported *not* listening when she was concentrating on something else. Like Maria, Pilar may not have been able to listen when Danish was spoken around her because it required controlled and conscious processing, but Pilar did not mention listening when English was spoken around her either. The ability to concentrate in an open office is

most likely also dependent on routine and individual preferences for work environment as well as experiences with noise. It is therefore difficult to know whether Maria and Pilar were actually trying to listen and understand while being in an overhearer role and for that reason, I refer to these situations as **possible listening situations**. These situations are relevant to describing language use, and what listener roles mean for inclusion and exclusion in different interactions at work. The following example from another participant also shows the complexity of understanding/not understanding, listening/not listening:

There is always some small talk going on in the background, some of which I understand and others not. I don't participate in the conversations though, so not really much help in terms of actually knowing if I understood anything.

(Derek, diary study, Mærsk)

These possible listening situations of being in an overhearer listener role are mentioned by several participants in different terms in the data and seem to be an important aspect of L2 listening for lower-level learners, as also the following example indicates:

Imagine living in a world where you're hearing a language all around you and you have no idea what people are saying... I was asked I think the first day I was in the office, do you mind if we speak Danish in our office? And this was a group of 8 people and I thought, what are they talking about? Was it, you know, what did you do on the weekend and whatever? And I quickly found out that it was it was one hundred percent Danish in that room all the time, so I was literally cut off work wise from anything that anyone was discussing. I found out later that a lot of it was trivial stuff, you know: how was your weekend. But imagine six months where you're not communicating with anyone. That you're hearing all of this stuff and you're wondering: well is it something I need to know about? Is it something irrelevant or unimportant? Maybe I would have a joke or something to say about it and I can't because I have no clue. So that was a difficult situation.

(John, interview, IBM)

It seems that whereas many L1 listeners may find it difficult *not* to take on a listener role as overhearer, lower-level L2 listeners, such as Maria and the participants in the examples above (and perhaps Pilar), do not always have the possibility of choosing to even be an overhearer because they lack linguistic knowledge in the L2. A lower level however also makes it easier *not* to listen. Maria was also placed in an overhearer role in the recording described in Chapter 4.1.2 where she was the moderator of a meeting, and her two colleagues switched from English to Danish when addressing each other, thereby excluding Maria. The two colleagues were talking about something work-related, which did not seem to directly concern

Maria, but if Maria was unable to understand what they were talking about, she had little possibility of choosing to actually listen and participate.

Even though exclusion and inclusion are inherent parts of social interaction, not knowing what is said around you is especially frustrating because it means having no possibility of choosing to participate in conversations around you. This means not knowing whether something important is said, and whether you are missing out on something. The role as overhearer is therefore an important role for L2 learners and users as it allows them to feel included in social interactions and communities. Knowing whether you are missing out on something is for most language users an important part of participation. Furthermore, being excluded from interaction because the others prefer to speak Danish is acceptable “because we are in Denmark”, whereas being excluded because of other languages may allow for more explicit ‘resistance’. As described in Chapter 4.1.2, Maria’s colleague decided to leave when Maria and the Italian colleague switched to Italian, and the colleague was positioned as a not-even-overhearer. Kraft and Lønsmann (in press) have a similar example of an Italian and a Spanish employee speaking Italian with each other, which is considered highly excluding. Danish among Danes is seen as another issue, and leaving or commenting on not being included because Danish colleagues are speaking Danish in situations like the examples above would probably have been considered rude since the language use among Danes is considered the natural choice “because we are in Denmark”.

However, a language user may feel just as excluded from an interaction because of lack of content-specific knowledge as because of lack of linguistic knowledge. As described in Chapter 4.4.2, Tomasz was not included in the lunch interaction with his two male colleagues, who only reluctantly replied to his clarification questions regarding details of the topic because they seemed too engrossed in an interesting conversation. Tomasz was placed in an overhearer role because of lack of knowledge of this specific topic, and because his colleagues seemed to prefer interacting with each other. This example shows that exclusion or non-inclusion is very often dependent on other things than lack of linguistic competence, but as described above, it may be difficult for a low-level language learner to tell why they are not included, and whether they are missing out on something important because they are not able to understand. The privilege of choosing to listen or not to listen is therefore dependent on

language level as well as the listener role the L2 listener is able to choose and is placed in by other interlocutors.

The listener roles learners adopt in different listening situations are therefore dependent on their **cognitive ability to actually listen and understand** in the specific situations as well as their **social and physical opportunities to act**, but also the **learners' own perceptions** of their social roles and identities. Listening as well as learning are therefore, to a certain extent, dependent on a learner's **decision to invest** in listening and learning in specific situations, and this, in line with Norton (2000) and Lantolf and Pavlenko (2001), has to do with the individual learner's identity and agency. For example, Pilar and Maria found it important to participate and interact at lunch, whereas Robert and Tomasz found it less interesting and important to participate in relational small talk, which interactions at lunch often involves. Robert and Pilar therefore also explained their experiences with listening and participating at lunch very differently. The differences between their experiences with listening at lunch as well as in meetings can be explained by Sogaard Sørensen and Holmen's (2004) parameters of *negotiation of social identity and discipline-specific content* as well as the notion of *investment* (Norton, 2000). Comparing Robert and Pilar's experiences in more detail is therefore necessary and relevant to show how a meeting or lunch situation in itself cannot necessarily be regarded as more difficult than the other. Whether a situation is difficult or not is very much dependent on the individual learner's experience of listening and participating in the specific situation as well as their experience with similar situations.

As described in Chapter 4.2, Pilar rarely has meetings in Danish, but she encourages her colleagues to speak Danish in meetings. She finds that meetings had to be carried out efficiently, and that English is therefore often a necessary and practical choice because she cannot afford to waste time asking for clarification in a meeting. At lunch, she often takes on the listener role as participant and feels relaxed and comfortable trying to use Danish because the social circumstances allows her to spend time asking for clarification and repetition. The interactions at lunch does not have to be carried out as efficiently as in meetings, and she perhaps also feels less pressure to understand the entire content of a lunch interaction. Furthermore, she does not seem to mind showing the learner-side of herself and, in fact, seems to regard the role as learner a positive role, which positions her as being willing to

integrate and participate on the premises of the local communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Robert, on the other hand, often takes on the listener role of overhearer at lunch by listening in on the others' conversations in Danish but not participating. He even admits to sometimes taking on the role of not-even-overhearer by not even trying to listen but switching off (Robert, interview, p. 14). Robert mentions that he generally does not talk much when he has nothing important to contribute with, and he therefore rarely dominates a conversation in any language. However, he also finds listening in Danish at lunch mentally exhausting because of the shifting topics, the number of people and the physical setting of the cafeteria versus a quiet meeting room. All of these factors therefore influence his ability to concentrate and listen. Robert describes the meetings he attends easier to comprehend because he has a lot of discipline-specific knowledge and vocabulary in Danish. Furthermore, the content of his meetings is usually IT-related, so there are a lot of overlaps between Danish and English in terms of discipline-specific language. Robert also seems to prefer listening in meetings over lunch because he knows how to handle the meetings and he knows that the 'face he puts on' works. Oppositely, the topics at lunch usually involve showing other sides of himself than his professional identity.

The individual learners' experience of listening in a specific situation is therefore important for their listening comprehension, and the learner has a certain amount of choice in terms of when to listen and participate. However, this choice is dependent on the ability to actually understand as well as the possibility of seeking comprehension help in the specific social situation. As Bremer et al. (1996) along with Norton (2000) point out, asymmetrical interaction takes place all the time because people have different agendas and power status, and this may influence L2 listeners' agency as well as their comprehension. This is for example obvious in Pilar's example of pretending to understand when being addressed in Danish by a manager because she felt the pressure to understand if the manager assumed she was competent enough to be addressed in Danish (Chapter 4.2.3). Whether Pilar would actually be able to understand the specific words used in this situation if she tried is impossible to tell because she has a feeling of not being able to. Understanding is therefore context-dependent, as Bremer et al. (1996) argue, and the specific context may influence a

listener's ability to listen and act in a specific situation. However, a listener's language level and ability to listen and comprehend also influence the listener's self-efficacy and belief in their ability to handle a specific listening situation, which in turn influence their possibility to act.

5.1.3 Summary

In sum, the case participants, as well as some of the other participants, reported listening when they were directly addressed in Danish, that is, when they were in listener roles as participants, addressees and auditors, and when it was important to understand. When the participants listened therefore had to do with their choice and ability to listen as well as with when the content and their role in the interaction demanded that they tried to listen and comprehend.

The degree of how much they were directly addressed therefore influenced how much they tried to understand, and the international employees did not necessarily try to listen when Danish was not spoken directly to them. They did not listen when they found it too cognitively demanding to listen, or when they were too anxious to actually try in order not to lose face in front of their colleagues. Last but not least, they did not listen when they did not find it relevant and worthwhile to listen.

The international employees often seemed to be placed in or take on a listener role as overhearer or not-even-overhearer because their Danish colleagues addressed each other in Danish and the internationals in English. These situations are therefore difficult to categorize as actual listening situations but can be described as possible listening situations (but also as possible learning situations, as will be further addressed in (the concluding) Chapter 6). The Danish employees generally seemed to use Danish with Danes and English when addressing international employees. The use of Danish however depended on the international employees' perceived competence in Danish (and probably also English) as well as the Danish colleagues' subjective competence in English, but also on the content and genre of the interactions, and the routines and 'agreements' among the employees. This meant that English was often used in meetings and Danish was often used at lunch or during breaks characterized by interactions of non-work-related character. Although the choice of Danish among Danes at

lunch or during coffee breaks was considered a natural choice of language by most of the international employees, this sometimes meant they were unable to listen and participate in the interactions.

Listener roles at the workplace are therefore related to the language choices, and are, as argued in the previous section, roles listeners may choose to take on if they want to listen and are able to listen, but listeners may also be placed in listener roles because speakers choose to speak in a way the listeners are unable to understand. In the following section, I discuss other aspects of listening at work which may influence L2 listeners' comprehension.

5.2 Listening problems and listening difficulties with L2 listening at work

As described in the previous section, the case participants found themselves in different listener roles in different listening situations at work depending on their listening **level**, the **social context** and the learners' **personal investment** in the specific situations. In this section, I focus on what listening comprehension problems the participants reported as well as why some situations are (experienced as) more difficult to listen in than others. I therefore start out by discussing the listening problems the case participants reported in relation to their listening level, because level seems to play an essential role in their comprehension in general, as the previous section indicated. I then then explain why they experience some situations as more difficult to listen in than others before turning to the difficulties the participants reported encountering when listening in Danish as an L2, as a way of expanding upon the case participants' described experiences. I end the section by discussing how language learner beliefs may influence what the participants experience as difficult when listening.

5.2.1 The case participants' reported listening problems and difficulties

In this section, I discuss the listening comprehension problems and difficulties the case participants reported, and as will be shown, listening level generally seems to play an important role in the problems they reported and why they find some situations more difficult to listen in than others. The listening problems the four case participants reported can be seen

in Table 5.2 below, which gives an overview and summary of the problems described in the case study portraits in Chapter 4.

	Maria	Pilar	Robert	Tomasz
Listening problems in Danish as L2	Gets tired	Gets tired	Gets tired	May find it difficult to follow when there is a lot of noise and many people e.g., a party, or people speaking fast
	Cannot elaborate quickly enough	Gets nervous	Gets stuck trying to translate words to English	
	Hears a word and tries to elaborate and does not hear the rest	Hears words but does not know the meaning	Catches words but not context	Sometimes experiences comprehension problems in meetings
	Has difficulty following an interaction if not there from the beginning	Understands overall concept but not single words	Misses first part	
	Has difficulty understanding without visual support	Has difficulty understanding without visual support	Cannot listen and read at the same time	
	Cannot work and listen to Danish at the same time			

Table 5.2. Overview of the case participants' reported listening problems

Table 5.2 shows that Maria, Pilar and Robert report different listening comprehension problems than Tomasz, and this seems to be related to listening level. Maria, Pilar and Robert, for example, all mention having concentration problems when listening to Danish for a longer time. They also report difficulty keeping up with the speed of an oral text and figuring out the meaning of the words they perceive quickly enough to follow, indicating that they are using controlled processing while listening. Maria's listening comprehension problems also involve not being able to segment the sound stream into words, not recognizing words she knows in Danish and getting stuck when trying to think about the meaning of a specific word.

Pilar mentions hearing words in the think-a-loud but not knowing the meaning of them, and explains that she often has to ask her son to translate Danish words, which she perceives and

recognizes as individual words but does not know the meaning of. She also describes finding the think-a-loud difficult because of the lack of visual clues. Robert mentions getting stuck when trying to translate the Danish words he hears into English, thus missing parts of the listening text. He also mentioned having difficulty looking at his interlocutors while listening. Tomasz only reports finding it difficult to listen and understand Danish when there is a lot of noise, or when someone speaks fast and uses specific terminology he does not know. He further explains that he is able to differentiate between these different listening comprehension problems when for example listening in meetings.

As mentioned in Maria and Tomasz' portraits, the listening comprehension problems they describe are similar to the listening comprehension problems low- and high-level listeners report in Goh's (2000) study, as described in Chapter 2.1.2. According to Goh's categorization, the listening comprehension problems Tomasz experiences in Danish are high-level listening problems because they are related to the overall meaning of a listening text rather than to the perception of sounds and recognition of words. By contrast, the problems Maria reports in relation to listening in Danish as an L2 are lower-level listening problems (see Table 2.2). Goh claims that L2 listening problems can be categorized according to the three cognitive phases: perception, parsing and utilization, and that these cognitive phases are integrated phases which are all necessary for comprehension. However, the phases also show a development over time, in line with Haastrup's (2008) processing continuum. This means that low-level listeners experience more problems related to perception and bottom-up processing, whereas high-level listeners experience more problems related to the utilization phase, which involves the listener connecting the perceived and recognized words to the context of a listening text as well to his or her own background knowledge by using top-down processing. See Haastrup's processing continuum in Chapter 2.1.2.

The findings from the case portraits therefore indicate that low-level listeners experience different comprehension problems than high-level listeners in line with Goh's (2000) categorization, and also that intermediate learners experience a combination of low- and high-level listening comprehension problems, like Pilar and Robert does. Pilar's and Robert's listening comprehension problems, for example, involve hearing words but being unable to figure out their meaning, which in Goh's terminology is a parsing problem of being unable to

form mental representations from words heard. Pilar and Robert also report missing parts of a listening text, which Goh categorizes as a perception problem, as well as being confused about key ideas in a message, which is a utilization problem in Goh's terminology (see Table 2.2). These findings are therefore in line with those of previous studies and clearly indicate that language level is an important, if not the most important, parameter in what listening comprehension problems L2 learners experience.

Furthermore, Tomasz, similar to L1 listeners, primarily reports context-dependent listening problems; that is, he reports experiencing listening comprehension problems *sometimes* depending on the situation. By contrast, Maria seems to categorize her listening comprehension problems as more general problems, which she experiences more or less every time she tries to listen in Danish as an L2 because she is struggling to simply perceive and recognize words, in general. However, the listening problems the case participants report are problems all language users may experience. That is, all listeners experience getting tired when listening for a long time, feeling nervous, and having a hard time focusing and concentrating perhaps because of lack of knowledge about a topic or lack of co-text, but they only experience these problems sometimes. The aspects reported as difficult when listening in Danish as an L2, however, seem to influence the participants with a lower listening level more than the listeners with a high listening level. This means that lower-level listeners constantly experience listening comprehension problems because of level, but they *also* experience context-dependent problems. Different parameters of the social context therefore influence individual learners to varying degrees, but the participants in the present study also describe overlapping aspects of the social context, which influence their listening comprehension, as I will elaborate on in the following.

The case participants, for example, all report problems while listening to the radio extracts in the think-a-loud, which, among other things, seem related to the lack of **co-text** in that specific situation, and both Robert and Maria explicitly describe the **timing** of their entrance in an interaction as important, as the following examples indicate:

When I immediately know what the context is then it is easier for me than if you came from somewhere out of the blue and rattle to me. Then I'd be, hmm

(Robert, post interview, p. 8).

I am in the conversation from the start and there is some English and then Danish then I can follow, but if I jump in later then I am lost

(Maria, interview, p. 8; see also chapter 4.1.3)

Not **knowing what the topic is** makes listening more difficult, and the first part of an interaction is very important as it sets the agenda and tunes the mind into the right topic to allow for inference. Furthermore, as the examples above indicate, the lack of co-text seems to create even more difficulty for Maria than for Robert because she has less linguistic knowledge in Danish than Robert does.

Similarly, lack of **knowledge about a topic** seems to influence all of the case participants' listening comprehension in specific listening situations. The examples of Tomasz' lunch interactions, as described in Chapter 4.4.2, show how he sometimes has difficulty understanding because of lack of specific terminology. Robert's experiences with listening in lunch situations versus meetings also show the importance of **discipline-specific vocabulary as well as general vocabulary** to participation in different kinds of interactions. The following example also indicates how knowledge about a topic and **experience with listening in similar situations** are important for his listening comprehension:

I'm more familiar with the topic and therefore I hear the same topic or the same type of questions being made quite often. For example how organizations run and how they drift and how they do things. So there it is a little bit easier to follow questions instead of building blocks

(Robert, post interview, p. 8)

The four case participants also all refer to **visual clues and contextualization cues** as important for their comprehension, mentioning agendas or slides to look at while listening as examples. Contextualization cues are related to the **context embeddedness** of the language used in a specific situation, and Maria's example about not understanding what her colleague was saying on the way to the canteen until she saw the menu (see Chapter 4.1.3) show that **how closely the language and the social context is linked** is important for the L2 learners' comprehension and participation in different situations.

Tomasz and Robert also both report that foreigners in their teams are relatively easier to understand in Danish than their Danish colleagues, and Maria mentioned that the relative ease of understanding foreigners speaking Danish may have to do with the situation of interacting with a foreigner, which in general makes understanding each other easier:

Of course if one has a strong accent then you have difficulty to understand but you don't laugh of them [foreigners] you just try to understand you listen more carefully
(Maria, interview, p. 13)

Maria's explanation of why interacting with foreigners in Danish is easier has to do with the **relations between the interlocutors**, including **previous experiences of interacting with these specific interlocutors**, which are important parameters in comprehension. Pilar similarly mentions that she prefers using Danish with someone who has "the patience" (Pilar, interview, p. 14-15, see also Chapter 4.2.3). She also describes pretending to understand when, for example, listening to a manager, thus referring to the **feelings and behavior** between the participants in an interaction as important for her understanding. Feelings and behavior are related to listener roles, as discussed in Section 5.1.2, and the participants' possibilities of asking for clarification and repetition, which are important for listeners' comprehension in specific situations.

The difficulties and problems the case participants report can be described as being related to different aspects of context, how closely connected the language use is to the physical context, as well as how much the participants know about the subject and their timing of their listening. The described parameters are, similar to Toegeby's (1977) parameters of social context that influence which forms of interactions are possible in different social situations, as well as Madsen's (2008) different context layers, described in Chapter 2.2.4. As I argued in Chapter 2.2.4, meaning is created between people in situated interactions by means of actions and language in a specific physical environment inseparable from the participants previous experiences with each other, similar interactions and social codes, values and beliefs etc., and the aspects described above are all aspects reported by the case participants as influential for their understanding in different situations.

What the participants report as influential for their understanding in different situations overlap and how difficult and problematic they find it depends on their (listening) level and individual experiences and preference. This may also be evident in what the participants report as problematic. Tomasz, for example, mentions noise as potentially disturbing for his comprehension, whereas Maria finds it problematic that people speak very fast in Danish. There is no reason to assume, however, that noise does not interfere with Maria's, Pilar's and Robert's comprehension in the same way as it sometimes does with Tomasz', but they may not be that focused on the disturbing effect of noise, being too focused on their lack of vocabulary. They may also simply consider different situations noisy. There is also no reason to assume that Tomasz does not find that some people speak faster than others, but **speech tempo** is often mentioned as a disturbing parameter in lower-level L2 listeners' comprehension of all languages, because keeping up with the speed of an oral text requires controlled and often conscious processing (Lynch, 2009).

To sum up, problems and difficulties related to listening comprehension seem very much dependent on the listeners' listening level, but level is context-dependent in the sense that a learner may be able to do different things with the language in different situations, as will be further discussed later on in this chapter. Furthermore, what problems learners experience, and what aspects of listening to Danish they report as difficult may be related to their previous experiences, preferences and their investment in actually trying to understand in a specific situation. In the following section, I turn towards the general difficulties the participants reported as specifically related to Danish and discuss how these reported difficulties are difficult to separate from the participants' beliefs about Danish, L2 learning and living in Denmark in general. This analysis thus supplements the analysis in this section.

5.2.2 Difficulties reported specifically related to Danish

In this section, I discuss what parameters of listening in Danish as an L2 were reported by the participants as especially difficult in relation to the language in itself as well as the social circumstances of learning and listening in Danish. As will be shown, these difficulties are hard to separate from the participants' language level as discussed in the previous section, but the difficulties are also hard to separate from the participants' beliefs about language, language learning and themselves as learners. In this section, I primarily make use of

examples from other participants than the case participants with the purpose of expanding on the case participants' reported problems and difficulties with listening in Danish as an L2.

At least six of the participants specifically mention Danish as a difficult language to learn. As one participant explains, this is related to the **many different vowel sounds** in Danish, for example, as well as the **lack of variation in the intonation**:

To understand people talking in Danish of course they talk very fast. I have experienced a lot of frustrations in trying to understand Danish. I am finding things that I wouldn't expect, for example so many different vowels sounds for a very few set of characters, and that is very confusing to me. And sometimes you pronounce a letter and sometimes you don't. You also have very long sentences and very long words but they are like reduced to a single sound, or that is at least what I hear

(Juan, focus group, University of CPH)

Another participant mentions that "in Danish things are not pronounced, it is not articulated" (Jasper, Interview, IBM), and third that "Danish just flows into the morpheus mass of glottal stops" (Allan, interview, IBM). **The lack of consistency between written and spoken Danish** is also described as especially difficult in Danish:

I find the hardest thing with Danish is the difference between the written and spoken language. It is extremely difficult to relate the written and spoken for me because each vowel seems to have 6 or 7 different associated sounds depending on where it is used and how it is used. In addition, a good many of the letters in words are dropped or just mouthed instead of spoken. Compare this to German, where from what little I remember, each letter has a pretty much fixed sound, and letter combinations can be learned a bit like mathematics.

(Derek, diary study, Mærsk)

Many of these observations seem related to the language level of the participants, referring to difficulties actually perceiving sounds and separating the sound stream into words when listening in an L2 at lower levels. However, there also seem to be overlaps in what the participants refer to as difficult about Danish specifically, indicating that most learners *do* experience some aspects of Danish as especially difficult, or that they at least have shared **beliefs** about difficulties in Danish. The point about lack of consistency between written and spoken Danish was also used in the data generation in one of the prompting examples for the preliminary interviews because it had been reported by other L2 learners of Danish in my pilot study as well as in other studies on Danish as an L2 (see Chapter 3.2.3.1). This belief

therefore seems to be shared by many adult L2 learners of Danish, and is an aspect of learning Danish which is also discussed by Ritzau (2011). Ritzau refers to this aspect of Danish as low orthographic and phonological transparency. However, as one participant mentions, this focus on the lack of consistency between written and spoken Danish may be related to how Danish is taught in language courses:

Because we are grownups and we start learning by looking at written material, we can't connect it... I can't connect it, I can't say we, I can't connect it to the sound. When I learned French, I learned it in school when I was young, and we didn't have written material until we were very advanced because we were kids. I learned English the same way no written material it was just sounds. The language [Danish] is extremely simple it has no conjugation it is easy... but the problem is relating the sound to the written materials that's what I can't really make the connection

(Petra, focus group, Mærsk)

Field (2004) also mentions that the focus on written language in the language classroom may lead to an inappropriate bottom-up learner focus on individual sounds and words instead of a more appropriate linking of context, co-text and lexical items for a coherent understanding, similar to what the participant above indicates. In line with this, some of the difficulties the participants report about listening in Danish seem to be related to aspects of the language they may have been taught in the language classroom, which the following dialogue from the focus group interview indicates:

- Petra: The tone. The rhythm is not the same as other languages I know. You say a word so you have an accent in each word so every word has a *tryk* [ENG: *stress*], the *tryk* is not in the same place. So when you say a sentence the *tryk* is quite different than the individual words.
- Juan: A colleague of mine was unable to understand me because the *tryk* was not where she expected
- Petra: Because the stress in the words is not always the same it depends on where it is in the sentence that for me makes it way more complicated to understand
- Juan: And I think that is why when I hear a foreigner talking in Danish it is easier for me to understand the foreigner
- Petra: Yeah because they put the same stress on each word instead of having the singing sound. It is more like singing

(Juan, University of Copenhagen, & Petra, Mærsk, focus group interview)

Stress is often addressed when teaching Danish pronunciation and it is therefore likely that the dialogue above reflects aspects of the language teaching that the learners are especially

focused on at the time of the interview. It is, however, out of the scope of this study to discuss what linguistic aspects of Danish may in fact be causing comprehension problems, but it is important to note that the aspects the participants describe as particularly difficult when listening to and learning Danish are shared by many of the participants. These matters are therefore relevant when discussing what makes it difficult to listen in Danish, even though these aspects may be something they have been told by others.

For the individual learner (and the researcher focusing on individual learners' experiences with learning), it is difficult to separate what learners think and believe about their L2 learning from what they know since both beliefs and knowledge are dependent on the learners' prior experiences and social context. The following extract is a clear example of how learners are influenced by the attitudes and beliefs of others:

I usually get people who say Danish is really hard don't worry about it. Danes say that. It's not really encouraging

(Elsa, interview, IBM)

What the participants know about learning and listening in Danish is therefore difficult to separate from what beliefs they have about Danish and language learning in general, as well as the social circumstances of their learning. One participant, for example, mentions that "Denmark is a bad country to learn Danish because everyone speaks English" (Juan, focus group interviews, University of Copenhagen), indicating that the social environment at work as well as outside work made it difficult for him to actually practice Danish. The following examples also indicate that it is difficult to actually learn Danish because most Danes speak English and have a tendency to switch to English when addressing foreigners, as was also discussed in Section 5.1.1 about language choices at work:

People are very impatient. After the second try they give up and turn to English and in stores that's another issue, I try to speak Danish when I go shopping they always reply in English. They know I am not Danish and instead of trying they just reply in English so they refuse to speak Danish to me

(Petra, focus group interview, Mærsk)

Danish is therefore by some of the participants also described as simply unnecessary to learn since it is not required neither at work nor outside work:

You get around quite easily, you know, talking to everybody in English. To the taxidriver, the butcher, whoever. Last weekend even a hairdresser. To everybody I can talk really in English and they would understand me even with my German accent. Danish people make it quite easy for foreigners to stick to English to not to learn the Danish language. It might be unfortunate for you know but it is like that. (Andreas, interview, IBM)

Similar attitudes are expressed by the researchers at the University of Copenhagen in Jürna's (2014) study, especially by the international employees who consider their stay in Denmark limited. The need for Danish therefore depends on the individual international employee's attitude towards whether the time and investment required to actually learning Danish is worthwhile, as Jürna also mentions. This again shows that learning and listening in an L2 is, to a certain degree, a matter of choice and investment, which is difficult to separate from the social contexts individual learners are in and their previous experiences with and beliefs about language learning, including their level. The aspects the participants address as specifically difficult when listening to Danish are therefore also difficult to separate from their individual backgrounds and social contexts.

5.2.3 Summary

It seems that the listening comprehension problems the participants experience are primarily related to their language competence, and that a lower level is accompanied by more problems with actually perceiving and recognizing sounds and words. By contrast, a higher level leads to more overall understanding problems or problems with understanding specific content words, which are problems similar to what L1 listeners experience. Why some situations are more difficult to listen in than others is therefore also primarily related to listening level, but all of the participants also report aspects of the social context as influential for their comprehension in different situations. These aspects involve, for example, listening to new people and new topics, lack of co-text and noise, as well as feeling tired, or uncomfortable and anxious because of power relations and positioning. Level is therefore not the only explanation for what listening comprehension problems the participants experience at work. They also refer to different prior experiences and individual preferences, which influence their beliefs about their own ability to handle different listening situations and what parameters in the social context they are sensitive towards. This leads to a relevant discussion of what language level and language competence actually involve, and whether they can be separated

from individuals' general competences, preferences and prior experiences. This discussion will be continued in the following section about strategies for coping with listening situations at work.

5.3 Strategies for coping with L2 listening situations at work

In this section, I focus on how the international employees handle the different listening situations at work described in the previous sections, and discuss how the participants' strategy use is a combination of strategies for listening and gaining comprehension, but also for participating in different communicative situations at work. However, it is difficult to tell whether the participants' strategies for handling different listening situations are used: 1) to compensate for lack of linguistic knowledge; 2) impulsively and context-dependent; 3) consciously and intentionally; or 4) because of preference and perhaps routine. I therefore start out by discussing the strategies the participants report in relation to their listening level, and goals and preferences in Section 5.3.1. I then move on to the relation between their listening level, strategies and their ability to report on these things in 5.3.2.

5.3.1 The case participants' reported strategies: level, goal or preferences?

As described in Section 5.2, the participants' language level, the social and linguistic context and the participants' goals and preferences when listening in specific social situations influence their comprehension. These parameters also influence what strategies the participants choose and have available to them in different listening situations. In this section, I describe and discuss the strategies the case participants report using during the think-a-loud as well as what they report in the interviews about listening in different situations at work. I discuss the strategies in relation to the participants' listening level, their goals and their preferences in different listening situations.

I have listed the strategies the case participants report using in Table 5.3 below, identifying them according to the type of data they were reported in. The strategies the case participants report using in the think-a-loud are listed first followed by the strategies they report using at

work in the interviews, as well as when listening outside work, and strategies they seem to be using in the recordings, which they themselves have not explicated.

	Maria	Pilar	Robert	Tomasz
Strategies reported used in think-a-loud	<p>Listens for keywords or words she recognizes</p> <p>Memorizes a word and tries to elaborate (does not hear the rest)</p> <p>Tries to connect recognized words</p>	<p>Listens for keywords</p> <p>Uses knowledge of text types</p> <p>Tries to guess meaning</p>	<p>Listens for keywords or anything that he recognizes</p> <p>Uses knowledge of text types</p> <p>Tries to connect the words he understands and guess the overall meaning and topic</p> <p>Uses tone of voice for inferencing</p>	<p>Listens for keywords</p> <p>Listens depending on who is talking</p>
Strategies reported about listening at work in interviews and think-a-loud	<p>Tries to listen in Danish at first, switches off if cannot follow or starts new conversation in English</p> <p>Tries to elaborate</p> <p>Tries to be active in interactions in order to understand</p> <p>Sometimes asks for clarification via email after team meeting</p> <p>Asked for Danish courses when started at IBM</p>	<p>Tries to participate in Danish as much as possible</p> <p>Encourages colleagues to use Danish when she is there</p> <p>Thinks about who to use Danish with</p> <p>Thinks about when to use different strategies (e.g., more appropriate asking for repetition at lunch than at meetings)</p> <p>Asks for repetition and clarification when she finds it appropriate</p> <p>Asks to switch to English if she has trouble understanding</p> <p>Pretends to understand if insecure</p>	<p>Has agreements and routines with colleagues about language use</p> <p>Explains in meetings that he will be speaking English but is OK with listening in Danish</p> <p>Asks if unsure in meeting</p> <p>(Trusts his colleagues will update him if important)</p> <p>Goes through content of meeting with colleague afterwards</p> <p>Uses visuals, but tries not to look at people when listening in order to concentrate</p> <p>Switches off (when not important, confused or too far off)</p>	<p>Has made an agreement with colleagues and manager about language use</p> <p>Goes through agenda before meeting and thinks about what they are going to talk about</p> <p>Asks for clarification in or after meetings depending on whether it is a word or information he does not understand</p> <p>Writes down words he does not understand and looks them up in dictionary afterwards</p> <p>Decides to focus in meetings</p> <p>Focuses more when people he does not know or people he knows speak fast or are difficult to understand</p> <p>Asks for classes</p>

	Maria	Pilar	Robert	Tomasz
Strategies reported about listening outside work		Asks her son for translation when there are words she does not know Uses visuals for help e.g., slides, subtitles, pictures on TV	Listens to the radio to practice Danish Listens for questions and answers on the radio to elaborate	
Strategies used in the recordings	Repeats what interlocutors said in Danish in English	Mixes Danish and English when communicating in Danish		

Table 5.3. Lists of strategies reported by the four case participants

The strategies from the think-a-louds are listed first because they differ from the strategies the case participants report using at work in the interviews, but also because they are the strategies which overlap the most across the case participants, and which most clearly show how the participants' language level influences their listening comprehension. The think-a-loud is furthermore the most similar situation the participants are in during the data generation, and the data from the think-a-loud can therefore be used to compare how the participants handle a similar listening situation. I start this section by discussing the strategies the case participants report using in the think-a-loud before moving on to the strategies the case participants report using in different situations at work.

As mentioned above, the strategies the participants report using in the think-a-loud are not that different even though they have different levels, see Table 5.3 above. This seems to indicate that the participants use overlapping strategies when trying to create meaning from a listening text, as the following examples from Maria and Robert indicate:

- Maria: I was just starting to try [laughs] and then it stopped starting to get a clue about what they were talking about
- Charlotte: So what were you doing until now you just/
- Maria: I was keep going and waiting to find key word, something I recognized. But it was too short
- (Maria, think-a-loud, p. 1)

It's whatever word comes along or that I recognize, but there were one or two words that, once again I got. I sort of four words out of the sentence and then there was one word, and I was thinking: "what was that? what was that?" And then sort of follow

(Robert, think- aloud p. 6)

Maria and Robert both mention listening for key words or words they recognize, and the participants generally seem to use the term 'key words' interchangeably with words they recognize, indicating that they all listen for meaning. That is, searching for the words that make sense to them and not necessarily the actual key words in the listening text. Similarly, the participants all report more or less the same strategies for trying to connect the words they recognize, which the following two examples, also with Maria and Robert, below indicate:

They were talking about this Marianne that came to Denmark after 20 years. I am not sure. And about a movie, but I cannot connect the two

(Maria, think-a-loud, p. 3)

Charlotte: *Hvordan fandt du ud af det handlede om politik?*

ENG: *How did you find out it was about politics?*

Robert: I heard *statsminister* [**ENG:** *prime minister*] and then I also heard ehm *politik* [**ENG:** *politics*], I think was mentioned. And then, ja min *synspunkt* [**ENG:** *my point of view*] my point of view

Charlotte: *Så du lyttede i hvert fald efter nogle bestemte ord*

ENG: *So you listened after some specific words*

Robert: Yeah, so if there's sort of words that I am familiar with, I'll pick up it's a political discussion or whatever but, yeah the case of gold beer yeah... ([laughs]) I've actually bought a case of that before. I didn't hear that, that was too quick, but they were talking about sort of ministers and *statsminister* [**ENG:** *prime minister*], so I can imagine that it was something to do with either being bought off or getting a favor or something along those lines

(Robert think-a-loud p. 2)

Maria and Robert both seem to use the strategies *elaborating* and *inferencing* but with different levels of success. None of them find that relating the words they recognize to each other leads to full comprehension, but for Robert it leads to an awareness of the overall topic or theme of the listening text, which is more than Maria achieved. Robert explains how he connects the words he recognizes by using his background knowledge to infer meaning, which in turn triggers a schema for the listening text, enabling him to guess or identify the overall topic and then try to infer meaning of the rest of the text in relation to the activated

schema. However, he also admits to guessing on the overall topic depending on specific words even though some of them do not seem to be directly related, whereas Maria does not even report trying to guess the meaning.

Willingness to guess is a strategy often described as a beneficial strategy in studies on successful learning and learner strategies (see Chapter 2.2.2), and it is a strategy that involves top-down processing. However, it is also a strategy that may lead to wild guessing, as Macaro, Graham and Vanderplank (2007), among others point out, and in this case, Robert's guess is actually not exactly correct. Nevertheless, Robert seems to understand more of the listening text than Maria despite his inaccurate guess in this situation. This is likely due to him having more linguistic knowledge of Danish than Maria, but he may also be using more beneficial strategies for handling this (and other) listening situations than Maria.

According to Vandergrift (2003), see Chapter 2.7, skilled as well as less skilled listeners report using cognitive strategies, such as *inferencing, elaboration, imagery, summary, translation, transfer, repetition or note taking*, whereas skilled listeners report using more metacognitive strategies, such as *advance organization, directed attention, selective attention and self-management, monitoring, and problem identification*, which are helpful for checking and questioning comprehension along the way as well as for monitoring use of cognitive strategies and for guiding and pushing learning forward. The difference between skilled and less skilled listeners is therefore, according to Vandergrift, primarily related to the use of metacognitive strategies because metacognition involves reflection on learning, which is essential for layering new learning in memory and for relating it to previous learning (see also Chapter 2.8).

In the present study, all four case participants report using cognitive strategies similar to those described by Vandergrift (2003), that is, *listening for key words or words they recognize; trying to guess the meaning on the basis of recognized words* as well as *trying to connect the words; trying to elaborate by using context and background knowledge; using the form of the text and the co-text for inferencing*, see Table 5.3, but only Robert and Tomasz report using a metacognitive strategy in the think-a-loud, that is, *directing attention* towards specific speakers. When compared, the think-a-loud exercises thus indicate findings similar to

Vandergrift's, in that Robert and Tomasz seem to be more 'skilled listeners' in the sense that they reach a higher level of comprehension than Pilar and Maria. Robert and Tomasz are also the only two who report using metacognitive strategies in the think-a-loud at all. All of the participants mention using cognitive strategies and seem to have the same cognitive strategies available to them, but their degree of success using them varies depending on their linguistic as well as background knowledge.

When comparing the strategies the participants report using at work, Robert reports using the metacognitive strategy of *self-management* as a strategy for managing his feeling of "panic" (Robert, interview, p. 4) in meetings when he has difficulty understanding, as well as *selective attention* when tuning in and out of listening at lunch. Tomasz reports using *advance organization* when going through the agenda before a meeting and thinking about what the meeting is going to be about. He also reports using *problem-identification* when identifying whether his problem in a meeting is related to a word or information as well as *problem-solving* strategies when writing down words he does not understand and looking them up afterwards or asking a colleague for clarification. In addition, the two men also report consistently using more global learning strategies, such as asking for classes and making agreements about using Danish as much as possible (Tomasz), listening to Danish radio every day and sometimes talking to colleagues about it afterwards (Robert).

Furthermore, Robert and Tomasz also seem to share overall goals of their learning and listening in Danish. These goals involve being professional, learning Danish for their career and using it in professional contexts. They also both mention having specific strategic routines for listening, understanding and participating in meetings in Danish. Robert, for example, reports announcing upfront in a meeting that he will be listening in Danish but speaking English; going through the content of a meeting with a colleague after the meeting; trusting his colleagues to fill him in if they are unsure about his comprehension, and, in general, having agreements with his colleagues about language use. Tomasz, as mentioned above, reports consequently preparing and planning his listening in meetings, as well as monitoring his understanding and solving his comprehension problems after the meetings.

Maria and Pilar, on the other hand, seem more focused on being part of the social community at the workplace and on fitting in. Pilar, for example, reports strategies that involve trying to participate in Danish as much as possible, encouraging her colleagues to speak Danish when she is around, and being aware of whom she can practice her Danish with. Maria's strategy use for coping with listening situations in Danish generally seems to be directed at participating in interactions in her team, which paradoxically, to a large extent, involves strategies for avoiding Danish. Her use of English therefore, with reference to Færch and Kasper's (1983) traditional division of *avoidance and achievement strategies* in L2 use, seems to involve avoidance of using Danish altogether but also achievement, in the sense that she keeps the interaction flowing. In the same way, the strategy of switching off, reported by Maria, Pilar and Robert, is perhaps also used with the purpose of not interrupting the Danish colleagues' conversation and as a way of fitting in and saving face.

The strategies the participants reported using for coping with different listening situations at work therefore involve a mix of *listening strategies, learning strategies, communication strategies* and *reception strategies*, as described in Chapter 2.2.2 and Chapter 2.7. This categorization is not useful, however, for describing the strategies the participants report using in specific situations, because the reported strategies are dependent on the learners' individual goals of and preferences for listening in specific contexts. It is difficult to tell, for example, whether Tomasz chooses to prepare for meetings because he prefers always being prepared, or because he has developed a certain routine for participating because it is or had been difficult for him to participate previously. Similarly, the strategies Pilar reports using to cope with listening situations in Danish often involve social strategies, such as going to the presenter after a meeting to ask for clarification or written help in the form of slides; repeating and clarifying by using English when in a conversation to make sure she understands; and taking advantage of situations where it is more acceptable for her to ask for clarification, for example, at lunch. Pilar's reported strategy use seems to be related to her overall goals of participating and learning through interaction, but also to a preference for learning through communication. As previously discussed in Chapter 2.2.2, learners' strategy use is not necessarily (exclusively) related to (language and listening) level but also often seems related to preferred learning styles and prior experiences of, for example, guessing and tolerating ambiguity when listening.

In sum, the data of the present study, shows that higher-level listeners, or ‘skilled’ listeners, use different strategies than lower-level listeners, or ‘less skilled’ listeners, and this is in agreement with other studies. However, whether the differences in the learners’ reported strategy use are in fact due to differences in language level or ‘skilled’ ability to use and orchestrate strategies is not clear from this study, as also discussed in other studies on language learner strategies (see Chapter 2.7). It is generally difficult to separate language level from strategy use, and as will be discussed in the following section, it is also difficult to separate learners’ ability to report on their strategy use from their actual strategy use and language level.

5.3.2 Investigating strategies: What do learners report?

In this section, I discuss what the participants are reporting on when asked how they handle different listening situations at work. It is an ongoing methodological discussion within strategy research what learners are able to report about their strategy use, and whether the strategies learners report can be separated from their listening level. As described in Chapter 2.2.2, many studies on language learning strategies focus on *good language learners* (GLLs), often comparing them to poor language learners, concluding that GLLs report actions that seem fruitful for their language learning, as opposed to poor language learners who report less strategies and less fruitful strategies. As Cohen and Macaro (2007) suggest, it is possible to be a ‘good’ beginner and a ‘poor’ advanced language learner because of strategies. However, as Gass and Selinker (2008) point out, it is not necessarily certain that poor language learners will in fact benefit from the strategies that good language learners (GLLs) use, and even if they try, they may not be able to use them before they have actually improved their language level.

As described in the previous section, the present study confirms the finding from Vandergrift’s (2003) study that all L2 listeners seem to have shared cognitive strategies available to them, but that skilled and less skilled listeners use them differently. Furthermore, the skilled listeners report using more metacognitive strategies than the less skilled, and this, according to Vandergrift, seems to be what makes the skilled listeners more skilled. However, as pointed out by O’Malley and Chamot (1990) early in the research on learning strategies, it

is difficult to separate cognitive and metacognitive strategies reported by the learners, in the sense that all reporting of strategies requires metacognition. The strategies that learners report using are perhaps only the strategies they are consciously and intentionally aware of using, and many strategies are perhaps dependent on routine or even unintentional (Bialystok, 1990). Furthermore, it is difficult to separate linguistic language level from the learners' background knowledge and strategic (preferences and) abilities, in that language competence may, to a certain extent, be dependent on learners' ability to reflect upon their learning, as the studies on metacognition argue.

Therefore, the fact that learners report using certain strategies for specific tasks, such as a think-a-loud exercise, does not necessarily indicate that they use them in other situations, but is merely an indication that they are able to report the experience of using the reported strategies. Gass and Selinker (2008) argue that learners are likely to report strategies which “(a) help with difficult tasks, (b) are conscious (at least in retrospect), and (c) seem intentional (again in retrospect)” (p. 443). Not only does this call for methodological reflection and detailed analysis and discussion of the strategies learners report using, but it also adds to the discussion of what the strategies that learners report can actually say about the learners' listening and language level. All data-generation techniques have their weaknesses when for investigating strategies, and “research may be forced to accept only reported behavior as strategic if it seems intentional, whereas the most important strategies may in fact not be so” (Gass & Selinker, 2007, p. 443). As described in Chapter 2, think-a-louds are often used in psycholinguistic studies to investigate strategy use, and it is therefore hardly surprising that the strategies the participants in this study report using are similar to those identified in other studies using similar methods. The participants in the present study, however, relate what they are doing in the think-a-loud to what they do in situations, which if nothing else shows consistency in their reporting and perhaps also in their experienced strategy use. They also report strategies used in specific situations at work, which again at least shows an awareness of acting differently in different situations. The different data sources therefore add to the trustworthiness and dependability of what the participants report regarding strategies as well as other aspects of their experiences with listening in Danish as an L2 (see Chapter 3 for an overall discussion of the dependability of the study as well as data sources).

There is a constant complexity regarding the participants' strategy use and reported strategy use, and as the socio-cultural studies on strategies, such as Jang and Jaminez (2011) and McKay and Wong (1996), discussed in Chapter 2.2.2, argue, it is not possible to list all of the strategies that learners use, because strategy use is context-dependent. In addition, Vandergrift (1998) points out, strategy use is highly individualized, and some of the strategies that the participants report in the present study, as described in Section 5.5, do seem related to the participants' individual preferences for when and how to participate (and learn) (see also Sections 5.2-5.4). However, the participants also seem to show a combination of these two above mentioned aspects in that they seem to have developed individual routines for participating in different situations at work, and it is therefore difficult to tell *why* the participants chose the strategies they do.

For example, Tomasz, who has the highest listening level in Danish of the case participants in the study, reports using different, and more and better strategies than Maria, who has the lowest listening level in Danish, but it is difficult to tell whether Tomasz had good strategies to begin with, which helped his language learning process, or whether he has developed good strategies along with his linguistic level and the language learning process as part of his language competence. What *is* possible to say is that Maria and Tomasz use somewhat different strategies and have different levels, but they also use overlapping strategies with different degrees of success. Furthermore, Maria and Tomasz may use more similar strategies than they report, or perhaps they only report strategies which are somehow particularly salient to them. It is even more difficult to compare Pilar's and Robert's strategy use because Robert is very good at explicating his thoughts on listening, and this may influence my categorization of his level as higher than Pilar's.

It is therefore, as argued in this section, difficult to separate the learners' ability to report on their strategy use from their listening level, and it is generally difficult to separate successful strategies and language level because language level is a difficult concept to grasp. Learners' linguistic knowledge cannot be separated from their prior knowledge and experiences, including strategic preferences and routines, all of which influence how the learners experience different social situations and thus what strategies they choose and have available

to them. Language level is context-dependent, as will be further elaborated on in the concluding summary of this chapter that follows the brief the summary below.

5.3.3 Summary

As described in the previous sections, the case participants reported using similar strategies for creating meaning in similar situations but with different success, but they also reported using individual and context-dependent strategies. All four reported using cognitive strategies, but only the two men, who were also the learners with the highest levels, reported using metacognitive strategies, which in other studies are described as crucial for successful listening and learning. How the participants handle listening seems to be dependent on their level but also on their goals as well as their individual preferences for listening and participating in specific situations. However, as other studies also conclude, it is difficult to separate language level and successful strategies, in that successful strategies may be considered a part of language level, and some learners may be better at reporting on their strategy use than others. Investigating strategies is therefore complex because it is difficult to decide what exactly the participants are reporting on. Nevertheless, this study shows that the participants were in fact able to reflect upon their strategy use for coping with L2 listening at work, and that their reflections seemed consistent across data sources and listening situations at work, indicating that these strategies were strategies the participants were conscious of using or at least trying to use. In the next and last section of the chapter, I summarize the chapter and discuss the key findings of the cross-case analysis.

5.4 Summary and concluding discussion of data: Language level as context-dependent

In this chapter, I have discussed the differences and similarities between the four case participants' experiences with listening in Danish as an L2. I have also related the case participants' experiences to the rest of the data from the study to describe tendencies across data and to address the research questions. The cross-case analysis indicated that listening level generally played an important part in *when* the participants were addressed in Danish, *what* listener roles they were in at work, and *what* comprehension problems and difficulties

they experienced. The participants' listening level influenced how successful they were at using certain strategies for listening in Danish as an L2, and seemingly also, what strategies they had available to them. The learners with higher levels seemed to have more refined strategy use for participating in specific situations. They simply had more mental energy to control and guide their actions because they had to pay less attention to perceiving and recognizing words. By contrast, the learners at lower levels seemed to struggle more in general to keep up with the speed of listening to oral text and create meaning when listening in different situations in Danish as an L2.

The listening problems and difficulties the participants experienced were therefore primarily related to their language level but also to different aspects of the social context. The participants explained experiencing difficulties with listening because of lack of co-text and contextualization cues; because of unknown topics and speakers; because of noise and time of day; and because of specific linguistic and social aspects of learning and listening in Danish. The participants' comprehension therefore varied somewhat across different social contexts, indicating *variability* within each learner's listening level across different contexts. As discussed above, listening level, as well as language level, is generally a difficult concept to measure and grasp because it involves linguistic L2 knowledge as well as general linguistic and pragmatic knowledge of language and language use. It additionally involves the ability to apply this knowledge and perhaps also the ability to reflect upon using and learning it.

Level or proficiency is a term used to show how language learners' ability to use language develops over time. According to Macaro, Graham and Vanderplank (2007), general proficiency refers to "the four language skills, usually aggregated, and is a measure of success in those skills regardless of chronological age and of the number of years that a language has been studied" (p. 169). The concept of level or proficiency indicates that there is some kind of stability at different points in time in a learner's ability to use language, and that this ability can change over time through use. The concept is widely used by both researchers and teachers to refer to how different language learners seem able to use language in similar ways at given times in their learning process. However, as discussed in sociolinguistic studies on SLA, by for example Ellis (1985), learners seem to have different levels, that is, ability "to produce different versions of particular constructions, more or less close to the target

language form, within a short time span” (Mitchell & Myles, 2003). This varying ability to use language productively is usually referred to as *variability*, and it seems reasonable to suggest that the learners in the present study also show variability in receptive language, in that their individual comprehension differs depending on situation, also within a limited time span. This indicates that what learners can do with language at a given point in time is not only dependent on their level in their language learning process but also on the specific situation.

As described in, for example, Section 5.1.2, different learners experience similar situations very differently, indicating that a typical situation at work, such as lunch, is not necessarily in itself more difficult to listen in than another typical situation, such as a meeting, but rather dependent on individual learners’ perception of the situation as well as their prior experiences of similar situations. Learners’ listening comprehension in different situations is therefore not only influenced by their listening level and the specific social context, but very importantly, also on their individual backgrounds and experiences, which are difficult to separate from their ability to use language. It therefore seems reasonable to conclude that L2 listening is inherently social, cognitive as well as individual, and, as I will discuss in the next and final chapter of the dissertation, this study is a good example of why contemporary sociocognitive and other holistic approaches to SLA are relevant and necessary for gaining further insight into *why* and *how* learners learn and use L2s.

Chapter 6: Conclusions, perspectives and implications

With this study, I set out to explore international employees' experiences with listening in Danish as a second language (L2) by focusing on their possible listening situations at work, their listener roles, their listening problems and their listening strategies. The point of departure for the study was to bridge the gap between previous psycholinguistic studies on L2 listening and socially oriented L2 learning studies in order to investigate how social as well as cognitive parameters influence second language listening in different situations. The main findings of the study were extensively discussed in Chapter 4 in relation to individual international employees' experiences with listening in Danish as an L2 and in Chapter 5 in a cross-case analysis of L2 listening at work. The two analytical chapters thus add different and important perspectives to what listening in an L2 involves, how L2 listening can be investigated, and what still needs to be investigated in future research.

In this final chapter of the dissertation, I start out by summing up the main findings of the study in Section 6.1, and I hereafter discuss the overall conclusions and perspectives of the study in Section 6.2 and 6.3. The first conclusion involves a discussion of the social and cognitive aspects of the study. The second involves the more societal perspectives of the study and the specific participants and learners in focus, that is, international employees and their L2 learning in a globalized world. Along the way, I include relevant theoretical, methodological and societal perspectives to discuss the conclusions of the study and the implications these conclusions have for further research. In Section 6.4, I touch upon the practical implications of the study for the teaching of L2 listening, for individual learners as well as for international companies in Denmark. I conclude the dissertation in Section 6.5 with a few final remarks.

6.1 Overview of main findings and conclusions

The case study portraits described four international employees' everyday experiences with learning and listening in Danish. The portraits show that what the learners bring to situations of language use and to their language learning process has significant impact on their learning and experience of their learning. However, the learners' actual and experienced learning is

impossible to separate from the social contexts in which they learn and use language. The cases were presented according to listening level. The learner with the lowest level was therefore presented first, and the learner with the highest level last. This way of presenting the learners was a way of structuring the data, which reflected how language learners' experiences with listening in an L2 may change over time because of progress in their language development. However, level of listening proficiency turned out to be an important parameter in the participants' experiences with listening, as was further discussed in the cross-case analysis.

The cross-case analysis shows that Danish is often used at international workplaces in Denmark among Danish employees, which creates possible listening situations for the international employees. However, whether the international employees *listen* or not when Danish is spoken at the workplace depends on their ability to listen and understand but also whether they are expected to and want to understand. The study confirms findings from previous studies on language use at the workplace in relation to language choices between Danish and English, but adds nuance to why and how individual learners of Danish use and prefer to use language at work. It shows for example that agreements between the international employees and their co-workers with regards to using Danish are important for the participants' opportunities for using Danish at work as well as their engagement in learning Danish in general. It also shows that different employees, managers and teams may have very different perspectives on how language is and should be used at the workplace if it is not specifically explicated and discussed.

The cross-case analysis further confirms findings from previous studies on L2 listening in that the low-level listeners in the study experience different comprehension problems and use different strategies for coping with L2 listening than the high-level listeners. However, the present study shows that neither listening comprehension problems nor strategies for coping with listening in Danish are solely dependent on listening level. They are also dependent on the specific social contexts in which the listening takes place as well as the individual listener's preferences and routines with how to listen, learn and participate in different situations.

As discussed in Chapter 5, the low-level listeners in the present study report general comprehension problems with perceiving and recognizing words whereas the high-level listeners only report context-dependent problems. The high-level listeners' problems are therefore similar to the listening comprehension problems L1 listeners may experience in specific situations when for example listening to unknown topics or speakers, when lacking co-text, when feeling tired or when there is a lot of noise. The study therefore shows that different situations may cause different comprehension problems for different listeners with different levels, but lower-level listeners experience more problems with listening in an L2 more often than high-level listeners. A situation is therefore not necessarily in itself more or less difficult to listen in than another situation in that the difficulty of a situation is dependent on the individual listeners' experience of and investment in the specific situation.

The participants' reported strategy use was also dependent on their listening level in the specific context as well as their investment, preferences and routines with listening in the specific situation and in learning Danish in general. They reported shared strategies for creating meaning of a listening text, but also individual and context-dependent strategies. They referred to using a mix of what other SLA studies refer to as strategies for listening, learning and communicating. The study therefore questions the relevance of prior categorizations of strategies when investigating L2 use. It also questions what language and listening level actually is and whether this can be separated from learners' strategy use and their ability to report on their strategy use. Language and listening level must to a certain degree be considered as context-dependent and inseparable from learners' prior experiences. This leads to the first overall conclusion related to the research aim of the study regarding the social and cognitive parameters of L2 listening, as will be discussed in the next section.

6.2 A sociocognitive approach to L2 listening

The first overall conclusion of the study, as also mentioned at the end of Chapter 5, is that L2 listening is inherently social as well as cognitive, and that these aspects cannot be separated for the individual learners. Listening is constantly cognitive in that level and processing play a role in the learner's ability to create meaning in all situations, but the learner's processing cannot be separated from the social context in which the learner is trying to create meaning.

This is the case for both one-way and two-way listening situations in that people always listen for comprehension when they decide to focus their attention on a listening text regardless of the situation. This study therefore shows how a combination of previous Second Language Acquisition (SLA) approaches was important and necessary for getting a full understanding of what L2 listening in different contexts involves and how learners experience L2 use and learning.

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the point of departure for the study was to bridge the gap between previous studies on L2 listening and L2 use to overcome the dichotomies of cognitive/social and learner/user within the research field of SLA in order to investigate L2 listening in everyday contexts at work. I therefore combined theoretical and methodological approaches to investigating L2 use and learning in a new way in order to capture the social as well as cognitive aspects of listening in an L2. On the basis of previous studies, I argued that L2 listening is cognitive as well as social, individual as well as shared, unique as well as general, in that meaning is constructed in the mind of the individual learner in specific social situations on the basis of individual, unique knowledge and experiences developed in and through a social world of shared understandings. I set out to investigate how the social as well as cognitive parameters influence listening in different situations and how this can be analyzed and investigated. I applied various qualitative methods often used in psycholinguistic as well as socially oriented SLA studies to capture the individual, cognitive and social aspects of listening. This led to interesting new perspectives on the overlaps of these aspects. I therefore ended Chapter 5 by concluding that social and cognitive parameters of L2 listening are inseparable. This means that separating the learner from the learning process is difficult if not impossible as well as obscure for the individual learner and therefore perhaps also for the researcher who aims to explore language development.

This study's conclusions about L2 listening are therefore similar to contemporary holistic approaches to L2 learning, such as sociocognitive approaches, complexity theory and ecological approaches, which are examples of a new wave of SLA studies trying to overcome previous dichotomies within the field. The core of these contemporary holistic approaches is, similar to the above described conclusion on L2 listening, that language learning cannot be

separated from language use; the inner cognitive processes cannot be separated from social processes; and the language learner cannot be separated from the language learning process.

Kramsch (2002), for example, advocating an ecological approach, questions, “How can we tell the dancer from the dance?” (p. 1), and Atkinson (2011), using a sociocognitive approach, questions why “mainstream learning theory, including SLA studies, insist on separating acquisition from use?” (p. 149). Atkinson further argues that cognition is situated and that “cognition per se is fiction” (p. 144), that is, a construct created by language researchers to talk about mental processes. However, as also Larsen-Freeman (2010) points out, people do not feel that their cognitive processes, their social contexts and their individual backgrounds are separated.

This study is therefore an important example of why new perspectives on L2 learning and L2 use are necessary for understanding language development and the different skills that it involves. Previous SLA studies have contributed with significant knowledge to different aspects of L2 use and learning, such as the ones on L2 listening used in this study, but it seems that asking the above mentioned questions and deconstructing existing dichotomies within the field add important new insight into L2 learning as a whole. Applying a sociocognitive approach to L2 learning and listening therefore, similar to Illeris’ (2008) approach to learning, explained in Chapter 2, means focusing on the relationship between social, cognitive and individual aspects of (language) learning; in fact, it means seeking not to separate these aspects. The approach to investigating L2 listening used in this study is therefore sociocognitive in that it seeks to investigate the connection between the social and cognitive aspects of listening. However, the study to a certain extent maintains the dichotomy of the social versus the cognitive aspects of listening because it is based upon previous studies’ separation of these aspects. This was nevertheless, an important and necessary step for investigating how the social and cognitive aspects of listening are related.

Future research now needs to develop new methodologies to capture learning and listening as a whole, and this perhaps also means investigating the overlaps and differences between language skills. As argued in Chapter 1.1 and in Chapter 2.5, one-way listening situations are different from two-way listening situations, but as far as research shows, they involve

overlapping cognitive processes. However, because of the transient and invisible nature of listening, it is a complex L2 skill to investigate. Investigating listening therefore makes using other skills necessary for the learners to report on their listening. This study indicates that the participants were indeed able to talk about listening, especially when guided a little, and they all seemed to consider listening a skill in itself, which was used differently depending on situation and previous experiences, preferences and routines. Investigating further how the skills overlap for different people in different situations is an important topic for future research, as is the investigation of covert processes in general.

Working with indirect data has consequences for the findings, the analysis and conclusion of a study, but also leads to necessary discussions of the researchers' role and knowledge in a study. For example, the findings of this study confirm aspects of earlier studies using similar methodologies, and this calls for a discussion of existing categories and concepts within L2 (listening) research, both theoretically and methodologically. The discussion of the categorization of strategies in Chapter 5.3 is an example of such a discussion. Research on L2 listening therefore still has many important and interesting theoretical and methodological aspects to explore and discuss. In the following section, I discuss the concluding perspectives on the societal frame of the study.

6.3 International employees and L2 learning

The second conclusion of the study is that the learners in focus, that is, international employees, have varying needs for learning local languages in the countries in which they work. The participants in the present study represent a group of international employees who consider their stay in Denmark more permanent than other international employees. They all have families and permanent job contracts in Denmark, and they all, at least to some extent, had an investment in Danish and considered themselves learners of Danish at the time of the study. The study focused on international employees' use and learning of Danish as an L2, and this naturally influenced who signed up for the study. The international employees who participated are therefore not representative of all international employees in Denmark. Nevertheless, the experiences and attitudes they share provide an important insight into L2

needs in an era of globalization, which has useful implications for the language teaching of skilled migrants as well as for language policy in international and Danish companies.

As mentioned in Chapter 3.2.1, the international employees' view on the length of their stay in Denmark play an important role in their investment in learning Danish, and as this study as well as Jürna's (2014) show, it is necessary to consider the relationship between time and investment when trying to understand international employees' needs for learning Danish. Even though time can be measured, it is perceived individually, and this means that for some, a two-year work contract in Denmark is a long time and enough time to make it worthwhile to invest time and energy in learning Danish; for others, two years is too short. The present study shows how the individual international employees have different and complex investments in learning and listening in Danish even though they consider their stay in Denmark more or less permanent.

An important perspective to add to this is that languages are seen more as economic commodities than symbols of ethnic or national identities in the age of globalization, as argued by for example Heller (1999, 2010), and this especially seems to be the case for international employees, such as the participants in the present study, who can get by with English while working around the world. International employees, who are often referred to as skilled migrants or expats, as discussed in Chapter 1.2, therefore have different choices and opportunities when it comes to learning languages than many of the refugees coming to Europe at the moment. As discussed in Chapter 3.2.1, many international employees refused to participate in the study because they did not find Danish necessary for working in Denmark since using English is always a possibility. English is for many international employees the preferred language choice at work because it is less time-consuming and allows the international employees to stay in face and present professional identities as well as other identities in preferred and controlled ways. Furthermore, English is considered the language of internationalization and a language of prestige and power, which is part of why the international employees have the luxury of treating learning other L2s as economic commodities. The international employees have the possibility of choosing to learn Danish if they for example want to improve their career opportunities, as some of the participants in this

study as well as in Jürna's (2014) and Lønsmann's (2011) studies did, but they also have the possibility of choosing not to learn Danish.

However, as Jürna (2014) also mentions, there is sometimes a mismatch between the international employees' perceptions of their needs for Danish and the Danish colleagues' perception of the international employees' needs for Danish, as well as between how the institutions or companies use language and what they make explicit to their employees. In Jürna's study as well as in this one, it is not always made explicit that the international employees are expected to follow meetings, such as department meetings, which are regularly held in Danish at the international workplaces. In addition, the present study in the same way as Lønsmann's (2011) study show that having English as a corporate language may mean very different things to different people and in different teams within an institution or company if it is not explicated. An important perspective to add to this is that language is an integral part of almost every worker's function on a globalized labor market, as pointed out by Cameron (2002). Cameron (2002) argues, language is especially important for the work of what she refers to as "creative professionals" (p. 72) because their work cannot be done without using language. Because of this, relatively high levels of linguistic skills are required to be able to use language to perform the work of "creative professionals," which many international employees are. Learning, using and talking about language at the international workplace is therefore important, and the possibilities for L2 learning at the workplace needs to be investigated further in future research.

In addition, The Expat Study (2014), as mentioned in Chapter 1.2, shows that many international employees, or expats, actually want to learn more Danish, and that language is important for creating and maintaining interpersonal relationships. The international employees who leave Denmark also mention lack of Danish skills and lack of Danish network as important parameters in their decision to leave Denmark. These aspects combined with the time perspective are important when considering what sort of language training this group of migrants should be offered. Focusing on listening seems essential for the teaching of international employees since understanding at least some Danish is important for their integration in Denmark both at work and outside work. Furthermore, their need to be able to write in Danish is often minimal, and their need to read and speak varies, and if their view on

the length of their stay changes, the improvement of their L2 listening skills is still useful for developing other skills and other languages. It seems that in an era of globalization where mobility and migration are common, and time for many is an important factor in their language learning, language courses need to be ready to emphasize some skills over others. In the following section, I elaborate on what implications this study may have for companies, teachers and learners.

6.4 Implications for companies, teachers and learners

The present study indicates that Danish companies, and possibly also similar companies in other countries, can benefit from a clearer focus on and explication of language skills and language use at work for local as well as international employees. However, when addressing the implications of the study for international companies in Denmark, it is important to point out that while this study does not indicate general problems with language use at the workplace, it shows how individual employees may benefit from agreements, clarification of expectations and explication of language use in different situations. When language use and expectations are not explicated, it may lead to many different perspectives on how language should be used in different situations at work. For example, having English as a corporate language may for some mean using English all the time, whereas for others, it may mean using it only when necessary. This study shows that using English is difficult for some Danish employees, and using Danish is difficult for many international employees. A suggestion for companies is to develop explicit language policy descriptions of how language use needs to be addressed and discussed on different institutional levels, for example, in teams.

The study also shows that clear agreements about language use between co-workers as well as employees and managers are beneficial for language learning and for making the most of possible learning situations at work. The individual international employees therefore also have a choice to invest more time in their language learning at work and take advantage of possible listening and learning situations as well as make agreements with close colleagues. However, many learners may need to be made aware of this by their managers or language teachers. Furthermore, using communicative tools, such as receptive multilingualism, which as mentioned in Chapter 5.1.1 can be an efficient and face-saving way of interacting at the

workplace, may need to be explicated as a legitimate choice for communicating at work and perhaps practised in class.

In relation to this, language teachers need to be aware that the learners they have in class may have very different language needs and backgrounds. Most teachers are used to consider how their teaching can meet the needs of their students, but teachers can benefit from knowing more about how listening and learning actually work, and how learners cannot be separated from their learning process. As argued above, this study shows the importance of a holistic view on L2 learning and listening, which involves understanding how learners' experiences and social circumstances are essential for their actions and choices in relation to their language learning and listening. These perspectives need to be considered in contemporary L2 teaching, as does the focus on the different language skills, as mentioned in the previous section.

Teachers for example need to know how coping with listening in an L2 involves using different kinds of strategies consciously, but also unconsciously, and that learners may have individual preferences and routines with using them. It is relevant to spend time in class making learners more aware of how their beliefs influence their actions, and how their actions may influence the social contexts, and the other way around. Teachers could for example spend time on exercises allowing the learners to explore their own needs and actions and discuss them with each other. Some learners may benefit from more explicit descriptions of listening strategies and explications of how their beliefs and actions are similar to those of other learners, whereas other learners may benefit more from clearer goals and awareness-raising tasks such as focusing on what they do and what they like. Teachers may also help or encourage learners to make explicit agreements with, for example, colleagues as a way of creating safe spots for using the L2.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, studies on listening argue that many learners find listening in an L2 difficult because they are not in control of their listening and because they have most likely not been taught that what they think and do influence their learning. Learners benefit from using language and gaining linguistic knowledge, but teachers need to help learners become aware of how much investment learning a language actually requires and help the

learners mobilize the energy to do so. It is relevant to focus even more on structured teaching of L2 listening in order to make learners more aware of how they listen. A natural extension of this study would be to discuss and develop relevant materials for the teaching of listening of Danish as an L2, incorporating important aspects such as learner beliefs, actions and contexts.

The study also indicates that teachers need to be aware of common beliefs among learners and teachers themselves and how these beliefs may influence their teaching. Teachers may, for example, benefit from considering the use of written materials when teaching listening and speaking skills. It is also important to consider why many learners of Danish find it a difficult language to learn and whether some aspects of Danish are in fact especially difficult to learn for most learners and why. However, teachers also need to consider whether the learner's beliefs are necessarily 'true' and if not how the teachers themselves can help eliminate, modify or question these beliefs.

L2 listening is essential for all learners, and the focus on teaching listening seems even more relevant when working with learners who do not necessarily have English or other L2s as a resource for creating meaning when learning another language. The fact that large groups of refugees have recently come to Denmark and Europe only makes the focus on listening and speaking skills even more important since many refugees may not master English and use different writing systems than the Latin alphabet. Because learning the target language of the country they enter is not just an economic commodity for this group of learners as it is for the international employees, they need to be able to understand the language as quickly as possible in order to be able to fulfill fundamental needs. Moreover, in Denmark, this group of learners is required by law to learn Danish in order to be allowed to stay in the country. We therefore need to know more about how to teach L2 listening to different groups of learners, and we also need to know more about why and how learners' language and listening levels vary in different situations.

6.5 Concluding remarks

With this study, I set out to investigate how social and cognitive parameters influence L2 language listening and how this could be investigated and analyzed in a holistic way. Throughout the previous five chapters, I have aimed to provide a thorough theoretical, methodological and empirical argumentation for how L2 listening is essentially sociocognitive and holistic in itself. To understand second language learning, and especially second language listening, we need to understand the motives of the individual language learner. Each learner is a real person with an individual story taking part in various social contexts bringing with them their own personal experience of these situations. Furthermore, language is a tool for showing and constructing who we want to be, and learning and using a second language as an adult can therefore be a difficult transition process where the learners cannot always present themselves in the way they want. When investigating second language listening, a holistic view on the language learning process needs to be taken into consideration as part of understanding why the second language users act the way they do in different listening situations, and what problems they experience with second language listening. In fact, the language learner and the language learning process are inseparable, and this needs to be taken into consideration when learning, teaching and researching listening.

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Abstract

This study on adult second language (L2) learning investigates individual learners' experiences with listening in Danish as an L2 in everyday situations at work. More specifically, the study explores when international employees, who work at international companies in Denmark with English as a corporate language, listen in Danish at work, how they handle these situations, what problems they experience, and why some situations are more difficult to listen in than others. Although meetings are usually conducted in English, more informal interactions at work are often in Danish. Learning to listen and understand Danish is therefore the most urgent language need for most international employees in Denmark.

The study takes as its point of departure that L2 listening is cognitive as well as social. For this reason, it is based on qualitative research methods and theoretical aspects from psycholinguistic approaches as well as socially oriented approaches within the research field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). This means using methodological techniques, such as think-a-loud exercises, interviews, observations, self-recordings, focus group interviews and diary studies. Four international employees' backgrounds, language practices at work, and experiences with listening while working at IBM Denmark are described and analyzed in in-depth case study portraits, and the individual case participants' experiences are subsequently compared and discussed in a cross-case analysis where data from other participants is also used.

The study shows that the international employees' (listening) level plays a crucially important role in when Danish is spoken to them, and when they try to listen. It also determines how much they understand and the comprehension problems they experience. The findings of the study however indicate that language level is context-dependent, and the study concludes that listening in an L2 is inherently social, cognitive as well as individual in that learners' prior experiences cannot be separated from their language learning process and the situated contexts in which they try to listen and understand. The study also, among other things, questions the applicability of prior studies' categorization of strategies for listening, learning and communicating. Consequently, the findings of the study have important implications for future research, theoretical as well as methodological, on L2 learning and L2 listening. There are also important practical implications to be drawn from the study. For example, international companies need to consider the role of language skills in their language policies, and L2 teaching, in an era of globalization, needs to focus even more on listening skills as they seem to be especially important for most L2 learners.

Resumé

Denne afhandling i dansk som andetsprog for voksne undersøger learneres oplevelser med at forstå dansk på arbejdet. Afhandlingen fokuserer mere specifikt på, hvornår internationale medarbejdere, ansat i internationale virksomheder med engelsk som koncernsprog i Danmark, lytter til dansk på arbejdet, hvordan de håndterer disse situationer, hvilke problemer de oplever, og hvorfor nogle situationer er sværere at lytte i end andre. Selv om møder som regel afholdes på engelsk, foregår mere uformelle samtaler på arbejdet nemlig ofte på dansk. At kunne lytte og forstå på dansk er derfor den sprogfærdighed internationale medarbejdere har mest brug for til at kunne begå sig på arbejdspladsen.

Udgangspunktet for afhandlingen er at andetsprogslytteforståelse er både kognitiv og social, og afhandlingen kombinerer derfor kvalitative metoder og teoretiske aspekter fra både psykolingvistiske og socialt orienterede tilgange til forskningsfeltet Second Language Acquisition (SLA). I undersøgelsen anvendes metoder så som think-a-loud øvelser, interviews, observationer, selvoptagelser, fokusgruppeinterviews og dagbogsstudier. I fire dybdegående caseportrætter af internationale medarbejdere fra IBM beskrives og analyseres learnernes baggrunde, sprogbrug på arbejdet og erfaringer med at lytte. De fire learneres erfaringer diskuteres og sammenlignes efterfølgende i en tværgående analyse, hvor data fra andre deltagere også inddrages.

Afhandlingen viser, at internationale medarbejders (lytte)niveau på dansk er afgørende for, hvornår der tales dansk til dem, hvornår de (prøver at) lytte, hvilke forståelsesproblemer de oplever, og hvor meget de forstår. Afhandlingen viser samtidig, at sprogligt niveau og lytteniveau, er kontekstafhængigt og det konkluderes i afhandlingen, at dét at lytte og forstå på et andetsprog konstant er socialt, kognitivt og individuelt, fordi learneres tidligere erfaringer ikke kan adskilles fra deres sprogtilegnelsesproces og de situationer, de lytter i. Dette fører bl.a. til en diskussion af tidligere undersøgelsers kategorisering af lyttestrategier, kommunikationsstrategier og læringsstrategier. Afhandlingen bidrager derfor med vigtig teoretisk og metodisk viden inden for forskning i andetsprog og lytteforståelse. Den bidrager også med vigtige praksisorienterede perspektiver. Virksomheder kan f.eks. med fordel indføre mere konkrete sprogpolitikker, og andetsprogsundervisningen bør lægge større vægt på lytteforståelse, da det ser ud til at være særligt relevant for mange learnere at kunne lytte og forstå på et andetsprog i en globaliseret verden.

Appendix A: Email for recruiting pilot study participants

Dear international employee at IBM Denmark

I am a PhD student at the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Copenhagen, I hold a Masters in Danish as a second language and I have been teaching adult learners Danish for about 5 years. The aim of my **PhD project is to investigate international workers' need for understanding Danish when working in larger companies in Denmark**. In the long run, the purpose of the project is developing the most beneficial Danish program for adult learners.

I am interested in different international workers with varied linguistic needs and use, and at this point I am mostly interested in **workers who are either learning Danish or speak some or a lot of Danish**, as I have already been in close contact with a lot of workers who only use English.

The first part of the project is based on ethnographic observations where I 'shadow' 1-5 international workers in IBM for about a week per person. I would like to record a lot of the observations on tape with your approval. The recordings will be used for analytical purposes only and are confidential. The observations will take place from **December 2011 to February 2012** and will form the basis for a second and more focused data collection period in fall 2012. In the second period I would like to go deeper in to the specific needs for Danish for the international workers and I will, therefore, most likely be inviting you to fill out a questionnaire or participate in interviews, focus groups or self-recordings.

I will be very grateful if you are interested in participating in the project for shorter or longer periods. Send me an e-mail on charl@hum.ku.dk as soon as possible so we can arrange a meeting where I can tell you more about the project and we can discuss your participation.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Charlotte

Charlotte Øhrstrøm

Videnskabelig medarbejder, cand.mag.

Center for Internationalisering og Parallelsproglighed

Institut for Engelsk, Germansk og Romansk

Det Humanistiske Fakultet

Københavns Universitet

Njalsgade 128, bygning 25, 3. sal, lokale 28

DK - 2300 København S

DIR 35 32 84 09

charl@hum.ku.dk

www.cip.ku.dk

Appendix B: Slides from IBM presentation

UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN Centre for Internationalisation and Parallel Language Use

PhD project on international workers in Denmark and their language learning

Charlotte Øhrstrøm
char@ucc.dk

www.cip.ku.dk • +45 35 32 86 39 • cip@hum.ku.dk
Dias 1



UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN Centre for Internationalisation and Parallel Language Use

My background

Masters in Danish as a Second Language,
University of Copenhagen 2010

Teacher in Danish as a Second Language, IA Sprog
Nordvest, 2008-2010

Research Assistant, Centre for Internationalisation
and Parallel Language Use at the University of
Copenhagen, 2010-2012

- In charge of the Danish department
- Teaching and organising courses for
international staff

www.cip.ku.dk • +45 35 32 86 39 • cip@hum.ku.dk
Dias 2



Listening at work - A qualitative study

Why listening?

Pilot study at the University of Copenhagen:
listening is the most important language skill when
working in Denmark

It is the least investigated skill in second language
learning

Important part of learning comes through input

Dias 3



Listening at work - A qualitative study

Why qualitative?

Getting a deeper understanding of the participants
experiences

Understanding what individual learners do

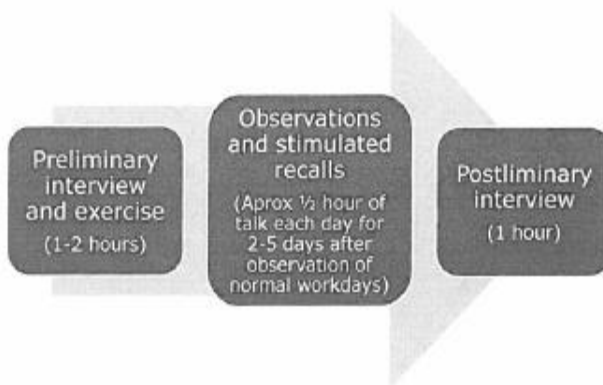
Finding new aspects for future research

Supplementing prior research on listening

Dias 4



Data collection



Dias 5



Participants

Who am I looking for?

People who are participating Danish classes now

People who are at a beginning or intermediate level of Danish

People who experience some kind of problems in relation to speaking or understanding Danish

People who are not fluent in Danish

People who understand and/or use a little Danish but have never attended classes

Dias 6



Participants

Why participate?

To learn more Danish

To learn more about your own language learning
and language use

To help research and future language teaching

For fun!

Dias 7



Questions?

Dias 8



Appendix C: Interview guide

Person knowledge

How long have you been living in DK?

Why did you come to Denmark?

How long do you plan on staying?

Do you have family here?

Do you like living in Denmark?

Have you attended Danish classes?

Why did you decide to learn Danish?

How would you describe your level of Danish?

Do you consider yourself good at Danish?

Do you like speaking Danish?

Do you like learning Danish?

What do you find most difficult in Danish?

What do you find most necessary/most useful in Danish?

How important do you find understanding spoken Danish compared to other language skills?

Do you think about what you do to understand spoken Danish?

What is your first language?

What other languages do you speak?

How would you describe yourself as a language learner?

Do you have any thoughts about what is good doing when you are learning a language?

In your opinion, what is a good language learner?

Task knowledge

When was the last time you spoke Danish?

When do you use English and Danish or other languages? E.g. at work, outside work

In which situations do you use Danish? In which situations do you listen to Danish, but not necessarily speak it?

Are there any situations where you would find it useful to understand more spoken Danish? Describe please

Are any situations more difficult than others to listen in? Do you do anything different in these situations?

Think of a conversation you had in Danish - What did you do to understand the conversation?

What kind of problems do you experience when listening?

What do you do for comprehending spoken Danish?

Strategy knowledge

What do you do when you don't understand?

Do you think about anything specific before you have to listen? For example in meetings? Or when you are meeting a colleague for lunch?

Do you listen for anything specific when you are trying to comprehend what someone is saying?

How do practice your Danish? Do you do anything to help you become better at understanding Danish? Use dictionaries, take notes, write down words you did or did not understand, repeat words to yourself afterwards

After listening, do you think about what went well/bad and what you might do better/different next time?

Do you ever experience that what you first thought you hear was not right? What do you do when that happens?

How do you use what you already know (about the situation/the person you are talking to/the language) when listening to spoken Danish?

Do you have any tricks or rules that you've made for yourself that might help you understand?

How do you feel when you listen to Danish?

Appendix D: Handout for focus group participant recruitment

Participants for focus groups needed

What is the project about?

I am doing a PhD project on international workers and their understanding of Danish and I am looking for participants for focus groups of 3-5 participants. Listening is usually the least prioritized skill in language teaching, so we need to know more about it to develop even better language teaching.

Who am I looking for?

I am looking for participants from Dansk Uddannelse 3 at all language levels, who are currently employed in international companies in Denmark.

How do the focus groups work?

The focus groups will take place here at Hellerup Sprogcenter at a time convenient for you and last for 1-2 hours. I will be serving coffee, tea and snacks and we will discuss topics such as your experiences with learning and understanding Danish, what you find difficult when listening to Danish and what you do when you try to understand it etc.

How do I sign up?

Contact me on 22820030 or char@ucc.dk if you are interested in participating and let me know what time and days you would be able to participate

I look forward to hearing from you!



Appendix E: Translation of Tomasz' extracts in Chapter 4.4

Original extracts in Danish:

Ex. 1

- Charlotte: *Da du skrev til mig der vidste du godt det her projekt handlede om forståelse*
- Tomasz: *Ja*
- Charlotte: *Hvad tænkte du så om forståelse*
- Tomasz: *jeg tænker det gå bedre og bedre men det er stadig en problem. Nogen gange der en problem så kan jeg ikke*
- Charlotte: *Så da du meldte dig så tænkte du at du stadig oplevede problemer nogle gange*
- Tomasz: *Ja*
- Charlotte: *Okay så du var i den kategori*
- Tomasz: *Ja*
- Charlotte: *Men da vi snakkede sammen første gang du sagde at forståelse var ikke dit største problem*
- Tomasz: *Ja og jeg vil stadig sige det er ikke den største problem for mig fordi jeg synes det skriftlige og udtale er større problem*

(Tomasz, post Interview, p. 8)

Ex.2

- Charlotte: *Så det var meget relateret til din karriere at du valgte at tale dansk*
- Tomasz: *Ja*
- Charlotte: *Det var det også da du startede med at gå til dansk*
- Tomasz: *Øh ja på den tidspunkt jeg tænker ikke så meget over det men man kan sige at det er også relevant ting*
- Charlotte: *For arbejdet eller hvad*
- Tomasz: *Ja*
- Charlotte: *Så det var også bare fordi det var sjovt*
- Tomasz: *Det var måske sjovt da jeg skrev op i 2006 ([laughs])*
- Charlotte: *Men nu er det ikke sjovt ([laughs])*
- Tomasz: *Nej. ([laughs]) men det er når man sidder i klassen det er meget sjovt ik? At den der elevperspektiv det er ikke sjovt det er bare som man skal gøre så*

(Tomasz, post Interview, p. 10-11)

Ex.3:

Charlotte: *Okay og hvornår lærte du engelsk siden du har lært det på den der måde, var det som barn eller hvad*

Tomasz: *Nej! jeg var 16 år gammel eller sådan noget*

Charlotte: *Så I har ikke engelsk i skolen?*

Tomasz: *Ja det har jeg, men på den tidspunkt det var ikke så godt, og det var det er en anden ting, hvis man skal lære noget, hvis man vil gerne gøre det, og det er en anden måde hvis man skal lave noget på skolen så til engelsk ja ([laughs])*

Charlotte: *Ja okay så det var ikke så vigtigt ([laughs])*

Tomasz: *Nej og det var en privatklasse som jeg skulle betale for det. Jeg kunne godt lide det, jeg synes det var meget god metode. For mig! Så*

(Tomasz, interview, p. 5)

Ex. 4:

Charlotte: *Så hvis du selv skulle sige hvor god du er til dansk, hvad ville du så sige*

Tomasz: *Det er svært at sige*

Charlotte: *[laughs] du må godt dele det op og sige jeg er rigtig god til at læsning og jeg er mindre god til*

Tomasz: *Ja som jeg har sagt (ja) så synes jeg ikke så god til at tale og skriftligt, men hvis vi kigger på den officielt resultat som jeg fik fra danskuddannelse den siger jeg godt*

Charlotte: *Okay og det var du bestod så modul 5*

Tomasz: *Ja det var pd3 eksamen*

(Tomasz, interview, p.2)

Ex.5:

Mc1: *Bare lad den der køre.*

Tomasz: *Okay*

Mc1: *Så det er egentlig lidt mærkeligt det man gør der. Man er på version 7.1 og man laver en upgrade på version 7.1 men det er så fordi der er noget der ikke er på version 7.1*

Tomasz: *Men hvorfor kan jeg ikke se hvad det er for nogle produkter på listen*

Mc1: *Du kunne godt se hvilket produkt det var. Prøv at cangle*

Tomasz: *Ja nu kan jeg godt*

(Tomasz, day 3, rec. 7)

Ex. 6:

Charlotte: *Okay så en meget typisk dag vil være du sidder på kontoret og arbejder og snakker meget med Mc1*

Tomasz: *Ja fordi det er ham som arbejder jeg arbejder direkte under*

Charlotte: *Okay og der er nogle kvinder med til frokost, er det også dem fra kontoret*

Tomasz: *Ja det er dem fra kontoret men faktisk de sidder i en anden del af kontoret. Det er et langt kontor og vi sidder på den anden side af*

Charlotte: *Okay så du snakker nogenlunde så meget som du plejer. Så der er lidt snak på kontoret men ikke så meget*

Tomasz: *nej det er ikke så meget*

Charlotte: *det er kun når det er arbejdsrelateret*

Tomasz: *ja eller om morgen når det er har du haft en god dag eller weekend*

Charlotte: *og så når I spiser frokost men det er kun nogle gange du spiser frokost med dem*

Tomasz: *ja nogle gange med de andre graduates*

(Tomasz, post interview p. 6)

Ex.7:

Charlotte: *Ville du snakke mere hvis det var på engelsk*

Tomasz: *Ja det synes jeg. Problemet er at jeg kan ikke finde ordene når jeg skal hurtigt*

Charlotte: *Ville du tage mere initiativ hvis det var på engelsk*

Tomasz: *Jeg synes det faktisk bare kommer når jeg kan sige noget så siger jeg det*

Charlotte: *Okay så du hører meget bare efter hvad de andre siger*

Tomasz: *Ja*

Charlotte: *Så det er ikke så meget dig der sætter dig ned og siger nu skal I høre*

Tomasz: *Nej*

(Tomasz, post interview, p. 2-3)

Ex.8:

Charlotte: *Men den frokost siger du heller ikke så meget*

Tomasz: *Øh nej [smiles]*

Charlotte: *Og det er igen det med at du ikke synes*

Tomasz: *Ja ingen spørger [we both laugh] de snakkede om faktisk kan jeg ikke huske det var noget med barn*

Charlotte: *Det gad du ikke snakke om*

Tomasz: *Nej nej jeg har ikke nogen barn [laughs] så*

(Tomasz, post Interview, p.6)

Ex.9:

Mc2: *Men det er lige før alle de tidligere stjerner de spiller for vores veteranafdeling*

Mc1: *Mm. Ja*

Tomasz: *Veteransafdeling hvad er det?*

Mc2: *Hvad*

Tomasz: *Veteransafdeling hvad er det?*

Mc2: *I badminton*

Tomasz: *Okay... I IBM klub?*

Mc2: *Nej nej, nej i X badmintonklub. Vi har nu vi har to hold nu i eliterække. Det vil sige det første hold de er ret dem er der ikke nogen, der kan slå. Så. Men det er farligt sådan noget for det er ustabilt. Lige pludselig så forsvinder de måske, og så rykker alle hold op sådan noget. Så det er det fint nok at vi xxx med de gode men øh*

Mc1: *Men jeg kunne også godt forestille mig at de søger de samme steder hen*

Mc2: *Ja ja for det er jo der er sjovt*

(Tomasz, day 2, rec. 7)

Ex.10:

Charlotte: *Sker det at det er på dansk når det er nogen du ikke kender eller er det på engelsk*

Tomasz: *Det afhænger meget på det møde hvis det xxx*

Charlotte: *Men aftaler I det før mødet*

Tomasz: *Nej nej. Eller nogen gange jeg ved det for hvis der er nogen som ikke er fra her men hvis det er en anden på afdelingsmøde vi har små kontorer men det er en stor organisation fordi det er en stor organisationsmøde og de møde er faktisk meget på dansk*

(Think-a-loud, p.5)

Ex.11:

Manager: *Alt i alt synes jeg, altså min vurdering er at du har gjort det godt. Du har taget udfordringerne...Og sproget? Hvordan synes du selv det er gået med sproget?*

Tomasz: *Jeg synes det er blevet meget bedre*

Manager: *Du har også været her i noget tid nu*

Tomasz: *Et år ja*

Manager: *Hvordan har du det med at tale dansk?*

Tomasz: *Det er okay*

Manager: *Men ville du hellere tale engelsk [laughs]*

Tomasz: *Helt sikkert [laughs]*

Manager: *Hvis du kunne vælge [laughs]*

Tomasz: *Ja det er et andet spørgsmål*

- Manager: *Jamen jeg ved, og det er nok sådan mig lidt der har sagt du skal det, for jeg synes det, sådan på langt sigt vil det være nemmere for dig i kundesammenhænge at være god til dansk. Der er også noget med at man er mere med i den uformelle samtale, når man taler dansk. Jeg håber det, at selv om det måske er lidt irriterende at vi holder fast og ikke slår over i engelsk...McI og dig, taler I engelsk?*
- Tomasz: *Nej vi taler dansk. Men når jeg skriver, er det på engelsk. Men han skriver tilbage på dansk.*
- Manager: *Ja jeg synes da også på sigt. Da jeg startede så havde jeg da ikke skrevet meget på engelsk. Det gør jeg bare og så blev det da bedre med årene. Der er jo ikke nogen, der tænker på stavefejl. Jeg synes du skal kaste dig ud i det. Begynd at skrive lidt dansk så skal vi nok lade være med at grine. Kun hvis det er rigtig sjovt [laughs]*

(Tomasz, day 3, rec. 8)

Ex.12:

- Charlotte: *Så du oplever faktisk ikke så tit at du ikke forstår, hvad folk siger*
- Tomasz: *Nej*
- Charlotte: *Så det er ikke en af dine typiske problemer*
- Tomasz: *En gang hvis der er en vi har en møde i afdelingen og folk snakker meget hurtigt jeg har en problem at forstå fordi jeg kan ikke høre de her ord at hvad de siger fordi de snakker for hurtigt, og det er også nogle gange de bruger sådan nogle ord jeg ikke kender*
- Charlotte: *Okay men det er mest i møder at du nogle gange du har problemer*
- Tomasz: *Ja*
- Charlotte: *Det er ikke så tit i sociale samtaler*
- Tomasz: *Øh ja, normalt hvis vi snakker sådan som vi snakker lige nu her det er ikke en problem og jeg kan også spørge igen, men hvis vi er mere mennesker det kan være en problem hvis de snakker for hurtigt*

(Tomasz, interview, p. 2)

Ex.13:

- Charlotte: *Der sagde du på et tidspunkt at du ikke forstod. Var det indholdet?*
- Tomasz: *Ja det var indholdet*
- Charlotte: *Okay så her forstod du godt ordene men ikke indholdet*
- Tomasz: *ja*
- (...)
- Charlotte: *Hvorfor tror du ikke du forstod det*
- Tomasz: *Det lyder ikke så rigtigt som hun har sagt for mig*
- Charlotte: *Okay du var ikke enig*
- Tomasz: *Ja*

(Tomasz, post interview, p.4)

Ex.14:

- Charlotte: *Hvad hvis det er et møde der er på dansk og du lægger mærke til nogle ting som du ikke er helt sikker på, kunne du så finde på at prøve at finde ud af det bagefter hvad det betød eller*
- Tomasz: *Det kommer an på hvis har noget at gøre med sprog direkte når vi har det møde, men hvis jeg synes det er noget vigtigt jeg synes jeg skulle vide nu, så jeg spørger bagefter*
- Charlotte: *Kan du så finde på at skrive ned?*
- Tomasz: *Ja det gør jeg*
- Charlotte: *Hvad med ordbøger*
- Tomasz: *Ja nogen gange hvis det er bare et ord jeg ikke forstår så jeg bruger ordbogen, men hvis det er noget information som jeg ikke forstår jeg vil spørge en anden*
- Charlotte: *Så det betyder noget om det er et ord eller en hel sætning*
- Tomasz: *Ja*
- Charlotte: *Men så ved du altid om det er et ord eller om det er noget information?*
- Tomasz: *Ja det kan man faktisk finde ud af, fordi det kan også være det er flere ord som jeg ikke kan forstå i en sætning, men man kan se fra den struktur design hvis jeg kender den sætning før eller den subject. Så selvfølgelig hvis jeg ikke kan forstå ordet men hvis jeg kan forstå mening og kan finde ud af noget, men hvis jeg ikke kan forstå den mening i hele subject*
- Charlotte: *Emne*
- Tomasz: *Okay ([laughs]) så jeg spørger en anden*
- Charlotte: *okay så du synes faktisk ikke det er så svært at finde ud af om det er et ord eller om det er emnet fordi hvis det er ordet så forstår du alt det rundt om*
- Tomasz: *det er bare det kan være nogen specifik ting om noget betyder men jeg synes det ikke det skifte den hele betydning og*
- (Tomasz, think-a-loud, p. 6)

Ex.15:

- Tomasz: *Den jeg faktisk ikke forstod*
- Charlotte: *Nej*
- Tomasz: *Hvad han siger. Øh jeg kunne ikke forstå meningen*
- Charlotte: *Okay forstod du nogle af ordene*
- Tomasz: *Øh ja de sidste par ord*
- Charlotte: *Ja. Hvad for eksempel. Kan du huske*
- Tomasz: *Nej*
- (Tomasz, think-a-loud, p. 1)

Ex.16:

Charlotte: *Så oplever du nogle gange nogle af de her typiske situationer. Gør du det samme når du prøver at lytte til hvad de siger på samme måde som du lytter til radioen*

Tomasz: *Ja hvis det er nogen jeg kender ikke jeg prøver at fokusere på han eller hun hvad siger hvilke ord*

Charlotte: *Ja okay så hvis vi nu prøver at forestille os at du skal til et møde med en masse du ikke kender, men du ved det er på dansk prøver du så at tænke på noget bestemt inden*

Tomasz: *Ja jeg tænker hvad vi skal snakke om og prøver at fokusere*

Charlotte: *Så du prøver at forberede dig*

Tomasz: *Ja*

(Tomasz, think-a-loud, p. 4)

Appendix F: Overview of transcriptions in additional appendix

<u>Maria notes and transcriptions</u>	Fejl! Bogmærke er ikke defineret.
<u>Maria interview</u>	Fejl! Bogmærke er ikke defineret.
<u>Maria think-a-loud</u>	Fejl! Bogmærke er ikke defineret.
<u>Maria notes recordings</u>	Fejl! Bogmærke er ikke defineret.
<u>Pilar notes and transcriptions</u>	Fejl! Bogmærke er ikke defineret.
<u>Pilar interview</u>	Fejl! Bogmærke er ikke defineret.
<u>Pilar think-a-loud</u>	Fejl! Bogmærke er ikke defineret.
<u>Pilar notes recordings</u>	Fejl! Bogmærke er ikke defineret.
<u>Robert notes and transcriptions</u>	Fejl! Bogmærke er ikke defineret.
<u>Robert interview</u>	Fejl! Bogmærke er ikke defineret.
<u>Robert think-a-loud</u>	Fejl! Bogmærke er ikke defineret.
<u>Robert notes recordings</u>	Fejl! Bogmærke er ikke defineret.
<u>Robert post interview</u>	Fejl! Bogmærke er ikke defineret.
<u>Tomasz notes and transcriptions</u>	Fejl! Bogmærke er ikke defineret.
<u>Tomasz interview</u>	Fejl! Bogmærke er ikke defineret.
<u>Tomasz think-a-loud</u>	Fejl! Bogmærke er ikke defineret.
<u>Tomasz notes recordings</u>	Fejl! Bogmærke er ikke defineret.
<u>Tomasz post interview</u>	Fejl! Bogmærke er ikke defineret.
<u>Focus group notes and transcription</u>	Fejl! Bogmærke er ikke defineret.
<u>Diary study examples</u>	Fejl! Bogmærke er ikke defineret.